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JOHN ALEXANDER MCGREGOR
M. A. (HONS) EDINBURGH

**THE WEST HIGHLAND RAILWAY:
THE POLITICS OF PROMOTION IN
LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY
SCOTLAND**

Presented for the Degree of Ph.D.

Faculty of Arts (History)

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Synopsis

Popular histories have dealt generously with the West Highland Railway, authorised in 1889 and completed to Mallaig in 1901. This study taps sources hitherto unavailable or under-utilised, to focus in much greater depth on railway development in the north west of Scotland after 1880, when the Callander & Oban route was completed and the Dingwall & Skye route was taken over by the Highland Company.

The general introduction identifies the wider social and economic issues which might be further pursued via the primary materials exploited here. It then reviews existing literature. Chapter 4 deals selectively with these issues, exploring the hopes invested in the new Glasgow-Fort William route.

After some discussion of the background, from the 1840s to the 1880s in Chapter 2, the West Highland Railway proper, opened to Fort William in 1894 and to Banavie in 1895, is examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 takes up the question of subsidy. Discussion then concentrates on the West Highland Mallaig Extension and the Treasury Guarantee which underpinned the Mallaig promotion (Chapters 6 and 7).

Other projects, including the Callander & Oban Railway's Ballachulish branch, the extension of the Dingwall & Skye route to Kyle of Lochalsh and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, necessarily appear. Ballachulish and the Great Glen are the principal topics in Chapter 8. It was impossible to ignore the activities of the Highland Railway in the Far North, or those of the Great North of Scotland Railway on the eastern margin of the Highlands. The main concentration, however, is on the West Highland Railway itself. Chapter 9 offers a limited postscript on the Mallaig Extension and the Treasury Guarantee after 1901.

The West Highland promotion had several elements; creating a new railway to Lochaber and the west coast was not the only consideration. Though the West Highland was the single most important scheme in a remarkable burst of late nineteenth century projects in the North, described at the time as a latter-day 'Mania', contextualisation had to take account of wider and earlier railway politics. Essential background included not only the broad pattern of rail services in mid-Victorian Scotland, but also the onset of unrest in the western Highlands and Islands. Studies of agitation and reform in the crofting counties have not concentrated on transport. With transport, as with 'land', there are important Irish parallels. From these complexities emerged the possibility of a third rail route to the coast.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1

This study centres on the West Highland Railway, which reached Fort William in 1894, Banavie in 1895 and (as the West Highland Extension) Mallaig in 1901. Other promotions, though considered at some length, are more or less subordinated to the West Highland story. In respect of the various projects to carry a railway through the Great Glen to Inverness or to link Oban and Fort William, the West Highland has a central importance. But the reader may well feel that the Garve & Ullapool Railway and other schemes in the far North West deserve to be treated in their own right, as do the proposed lines in Argyll. The Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway (1887), to which the North British Railway offered a guarantee and working agreement, foreshadowed North British support for the West Highland. Loch Fyne and Inverary were disputed in due course between the Callander & Oban Railway and the West Highland. The North West lines contended with the Mallaig Extension for financial support from the state. Put matters thus, and the West Highland Railway retains its central place.

In any case it is necessary first of all to outline the pattern of rail services in the north of Scotland prior to the 1880s. Consolidation of the Highland Railway (one of several important amalgamations of the 1860s); completion of the Dingwall & Skye Railway to Strome Ferry (1870); and the step by step advance of the Callander & Oban Railway (worked and supported by the Caledonian Railway) to its western terminus (reached in 1880) were the defining developments. The Glasgow & North Western Railway, which Parliament rejected in 1883, was the last attempt to drive a trunk line to Inverness by the westerly route. It has never been properly studied. Popular accounts depict the Glasgow & North Western as a North British client, like the Crinan line some three years later. And these accounts generally assume that in supporting the West Highland Company the North British aimed ultimately at Inverness. In fact the Glasgow & North Western was an ambitious speculative promotion - a "contractors' line", and North British motives were tangled. Here too the scope of study might be widened. In so far as the North British Company sought to attack the Highland Railway, there are parallels in the expansionist ambitions of the Great North of Scotland Company and that Company's support for the Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Railway. But the Great North of Scotland Railway has been kept to the margins of discussion.^[1]

The parameters of the investigation are thus a little arbitrary. It is arguable that tighter, more exhaustive study of, say, the Garve & Ullapool Railway, the only promotion in the North West to secure its act, would yield more precise, though more limited, results. Much the same might be said for the Clyde,

Ardishaig & Crinan Railway, while the Glasgow & North Western scheme certainly deserves its own historian. And the body of evidence for, say, the Callander & Oban Company's Dalmally-to-Inverary branch is compact and manageable by comparison with the assorted primary materials for the West Highland Railway. But the West Highland Railway was built - these other lines were not. There are, moreover, at least **three** good reasons for the shape of this study. The West Highland promotion - really two successive promotions during 1887-9, exhibits a rich mixture of ingredients, some of which are ignored or distorted in the well-known popular accounts by Dow, Hamilton-Ellis and Thomas.^[2] The pursuit of some form of subsidy for a railway from Fort William to the west coast constitutes an investigation-within-an investigation; no coherent account, from the recommendations of the Napier Commission in 1884 to the legislation authorising a Treasury Guarantee for the Mallaig Extension in 1896, has ever been attempted. The MacKenzie Papers (West Highland Museum, Fort William), which were first classified and evaluated by the present writer, offer an especially intimate view of the politics of promotion in Fort William and Lochaber and of the hopes invested in the new line. Nigel B. MacKenzie, solicitor, bank agent and factor, became the Fort William agent of the West Highland Company after orchestrating the promoters' parliamentary presentation of their line north from Crianlarich.^[3]

Without recourse to the archive of the Scottish railway companies in the Scottish Record Office, the MacKenzie Papers cannot be exploited to the full. Similar material can be found in the surviving correspondence of MacRae, Flett & Rennie, the Edinburgh solicitors who were the principal agents of the West Highland Railway. MacKenzie's place in the wider history of the Highlands is certainly inferior to that of Charles Innes (Innes & MacKay of Inverness), who undertook the defence of Island crofters during the agitation of the 1880s and made repeated attempts to secure a railway for the Great Glen. This study is selective in that it attempts to make the best possible use of MacKenzie's material.

The part played by landowners and sporting tenants is more than adequately represented. Further treatment of particular figures would require additional resort to estate papers. Use of *The Scotsman*, *Glasgow Herald* and other newspapers has been guided by the press-cutting files of the railway companies. How far the policies of the North British Railway were shaped by John Walker and John Conacher, successive General Managers, is potentially another investigation-within-an-investigation. Conacher's personal records deserve attention. His close relationship with the North British Chairman, the Marquess of Tweeddale, and the infighting among the directors (which brought both Conacher and Tweeddale

down) have some bearing on the West Highland story.^[4] The Moffat Papers (Aberdeen University Library) likewise illuminate the expansionist years of the Great North of Scotland Company. (William Moffat was General Manager from 1879 to 1906.)^[5] A fuller background to the Mallaig Guarantee and further detail on its operation (1901-31) could be obtained from the Board of Trade-cum-Ministry of Transport archive in the Public Record Office; but the story has first of all to be pieced together from Scottish sources. And these sources are sufficient to demonstrate how light railways supported by local authorities came to be seen as the alternative to government subsidy for conventional railways like the Garve & Ullapool and the Mallaig Extension.

Parliamentary Bills usually offer estimates, briefs for promoters, petitions against, minutes of evidence and speeches by counsel. On occasion they include proofs and items of correspondence. Tabular data might be "handed in". Proofs (precognitions) form a large part of the MacKenzie Papers: much edited and recast, they can be compared with the more polished and circumspect record in the parliamentary minutes of evidence. Testimony might be re-ordered, too, between passing committee in one House and going on to the next. The West Highland promotion was hastily reviewed in this way before it reached the Commons, following rejection of the Fort William-to-Roshven section by the House of Lords. And it is useful to have the proofs of prospective witnesses who did not, for one reason or another, give evidence in Parliament. The minutes of evidence and preliminary proofs consulted during this study are listed in Appendix 1. They amply illustrate the expectations invested in the West Highland Railway. Under 'Bills' are also to be found miscellaneous holdings with some parliamentary connection - for example, the North British General Manager's annual notes on legislation likely to touch his Company. There is inevitably much duplication, reflecting the varying interest of the five Scottish companies in the legislation of their allies and rivals. Marginalia in the minutes of evidence chart the course of parliamentary contests.

Maps and plans relating to would-be promotions, to Bills which failed and to successful Bills survive in the Scottish Record Office and elsewhere. Again, there is much duplication, given the requirement to deposit copies of plans in each sheriffdom touched by a proposed line. The accompanying 'books of reference', listing owners, tenants, buildings and land use within the limits of deviation, are immensely detailed and lend themselves to particular studies of, say, a crofting township or a terrace of working class houses. Other items occasionally filed with maps and plans include notices-of-intent in Scotland's official journal of record, the *Edinburgh Gazette*. These are especially useful in tracing the more obscure pro-

motions which went no further down the parliamentary road, with only cursory attention in the regular press. For schemes brought to fruition, public timetables and, more important, working timetables, together with week-to-week operating notices, are readily available and copiously rich in local information.

Under 'Companies' (SRO), minute books and correspondence were the main resort. The lesser Companies, eventually satellite to or swallowed by the main five, offer little else; but they are often more forthcoming (or more naïve?) in what they reveal. Within the voluminous records of the North British Railway, 'General Managers' Files' were especially useful. The West Highland Railway and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway are both well represented here. Though correspondence predominates, there is a wealth of other material; organisation is rough and ready, by subject - for example, fish handling at Mallaig or excursion trains on Fort William's public holidays, and not chronological. Among items turned up at random were drawings of the additional station proposed for Lochnanuamh on the Mallaig Extension and off-the-record opinions of Board of Trade inspectors, carefully noted by North British officers. More generally, West Highland records remain distinct until 1908, when the Company was finally taken over by the North British Railway. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, though effectively a branch of the West Highland, remained nominally independent until 1913, and this is likewise reflected in the records. The North British Company's own minute books are, in themselves, relatively meagre. The minute books of the Highland Railway and its constituents and those of the Caledonian Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway were used only in so far as they reinforced or clarified issues already accessed.

The Scottish Record Office material requires contextualisation and some technical expertise. By the time that the West Highland Railway came into being, the basic parliamentary formulae were some forty years established; promoters and opponents routinely sought for loopholes in land clauses and standing orders etc. 'Petitions against' are not always what they seem. The Scottish Rights of Way Society entered a formal objection to the West Highland Railway, without hostile intent, to establish the status of the old military roads, which were cut by the line or lay for some distance within the limits of deviation.^[6] A Bill might fail in its main purpose yet be pressed forward because the parties concerned wanted to preserve the agreements or other provisions which had been scheduled to it. The West Highland Railway's Inverness Extension Bill of 1894-5 became a dead letter, but the Act was completed for the sake of a special schedule giving retrospective approval to a small alteration of the West Highland line on Rannoch Moor.^[7] The West Highland Company and the burgh of Fort William resolved their differences

over access to the foreshore in an agreement scheduled to the Ballachulish Extension Act of 1896.^[8] The line remained unbuilt but the agreement stood. The North British 'General Managers' Files' on Roshven and Mallaig appear to end abruptly. In fact, the story continues in files reclassified by the London & North Eastern Railway after the Grouping, the logic being that the Treasury Guarantee for the Mallaig Extension ran on to 1931^[9].

The sources illuminate a range of economic and social topics, some of which are treated more fully in Chapters 4 and 9. There are detailed figures of livestock. The tables prepared, parish by parish, within the catchment claimed by the Glasgow & North Western Railway are especially striking: the main compiler, Fort William distiller, Donald P. MacDonald, cast the widest possible net.^[10] In the case of the West Highland Railway, both preliminary proofs (precognitions) and parliamentary evidence contain much information on landlord-tenant relations, arrangements for wintering, new patterns of disposal and purchase encouraged by transport development and other agricultural topics. There is ample confirmation that the opening of the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway had made for a revival of droving, taking traffic from the steamers. Once railheads became available at Dalwhinnie, Lairg, Tyndrum and elsewhere, farmers preferred to 'walk' their animals to the trains.

The shift to sporting estates is illustrated too, with much emphasis on the range of traffic which these generated. ("The population that inhabit the deer forests are very gregarious, and ... rush about a great deal, .. travelling backwards and forwards on the railway ..")^[11] There are several reminders that first class passenger traffic remained important until 1914. When a house was built for the stationmaster at Banavie Pier, the District Superintendent of the North British Railway advised his General Manager that tourists of the better class transferring from steamer to train might dislike having to pass the stationmaster's door.^[12] And first class traffic meant horse-and-carriage traffic, which needed suitable rolling stock and loading banks.^[13] Family saloons, hired at discounted first class fares and attached to regular trains, were familiar on the West Highland route, as elsewhere in the Highlands, until displaced by the family motor car.^[14]

That the crofting and fishing community of the western Highlands and Islands had to be assisted but not pauperised is a recurring theme. Ranald MacDonald, factor for the Gordon-Cathcart estates, urged that a new railhead at Mallaig or Roshven would be much better than any other kind of "external aid".

It would put them in the way of helping themselves. It would not only bring them within the labour market, but ... in contact with the people on the mainland and in the south. (The) railway, both by developing the fishing and by bringing them in contact with the outer world would be the greatest possible benefit..^[15]

There was broad agreement that improved transport would soon professionalise the west coast fishery, bringing in buyers and encouraging new traffic in fresh fish: the curers' grip would be loosened and the crofter-fisherman, with the invigorating promise of competition, would turn wholeheartedly to fishing.

Some insights are fortuitous. In Glen Spean the West Highland Railway cut through the club farms on The MacKintosh's Brae Lochaber estate. The surveys, negotiations and associated correspondence throw light on the practice of club-crofting.^[16] The Crofter-Liberal M.P.s saw railway development as a means of stabilising and rebuilding the population of the countryside.^[17] Proprietors on the mainland, whose estates had found a viable balance of population a generation earlier after the Potato Famine, argued that new railways could best serve the coastal fringe and the Islands by facilitating emigration.

The railway will take them from Skye, it will help the landlords and enrich the country, and increase the paying population, which will make the railway pay. (The) poorest people do not get any supplies to speak of, they are the people who fill the poor houses ..^[18]

No railway promotion in the Highlands during the period of this study was likely to succeed unless Parliament was persuaded that landowners and sporting tenants both wanted the scheme and were ready to do their duty by it. George Malcolm, factor for the Ellice Trustees (Invergarry), advised the Caledonian Railway that the sportsmen were vital to the success of the proposed Connel Ferry - Fort William branch.

As a rule, West Highland proprietors are poor, and they live at present in very poor times so that .., though very willing to invest in the stock .., it would be out of the power of most of them to do so to any large extent, but I have some hope that many of the shooting tenants - who are mostly rich men, .. to whom the extension of railway facilities ... is of great consequence, would do so.^[19]

Lord Burton, who had a long lease of the Ellices' Glen Quoich property, is a case in point. He supported the Glasgow & North Western Railway, the West Highland Railway and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway.

The influence of the landed interest appears again and again. The Luss Trustees obtained an arched masonry viaduct at Craigenarden, as more in keeping with the scenery of Loch Lomond than the lattice

girders otherwise standard on the West Highland line between Helensburgh and Fort William^[20]. There were private stations on the West Highland route at Corrour (Sir John Stirling-Maxwell) and Beasdale (A.M. Nicholson of Arisaig). These later became semi-public. The Cameron-Head family (Inverailort) settled for a “shooting platform” at Lechavuie.^[21] The MacKintosh and his pugnacious factor, Alan MacDonald, insisted that the station in upper Glen Spean be named “Tulloch” and not “Inverlair” (which lay across the river, on Lord Abinger’s land).^[22] Sir John Menzies demanded (unsuccessfully) the right to limit traffic on the new road from Rannoch station to Loch Rannoch, though the West Highland Company had met the costs of construction.^[23] The Ellice family insisted that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus line was screened along Loch Oich^[24]. The Marquess of Breadalbane scrutinised the plans of his two tenants, the hotel keepers at Inveroran and Kingshouse, who offered to provide a tourist coach linking Bridge of Orchy with Glen Etive and Glen Coe. (“You should time them”, he warned the North British Railway, “otherwise they may put off unnecessary time at each of their Hotels in the hope of inducing travellers to partake of ‘light refreshments’ ...”)^[25] The possibility of damage to the Black Corries deer sanctuary on Rannoch Moor occupied the parliamentary committee much longer than the disturbance of the Brae Lochaber crofters.^[26] Breadalbane obtained a ‘brake van pass’ for his wife.

We often walk from Blackmount to Crianlarich, or go by train ... and walk back. What she is very anxious to be able to do is ... travel in the van of the goods train. ... I asked your man at Crianlarich ... but ... there was a very strict rule against it, and ... I naturally did not wish to ... put an official in a false position. (She) would pay a first class fare and only wants the permission between Crianlarich and Bridge of Orchy.^[27]

Besides the privileges of property, the problems are also on display. Conversion to deer forest and grouse moor in part reflected increasing difficulty in leasing the large sheep farms. Breadalbane’s tenant farmers in Strathfillan and Strathulla, whose grazing was severed by the railway, insisted on the fullest provision of ‘creeps’ and occupation bridges, and Breadalbane feared that he could not re-let without placating them.^[28]

The estate factor, who was often lawyer, bank agent and tenant farmer besides acting as ‘man of business’ for one or more proprietors is a frequent figure. Of the three already cited, George Malcolm stands out. He was spokesman for the Highland Property Association. He submitted expert testimony on deer forest management to the Napier Commission.^[29] There were many others - from James Wilson, who organised the tenants on the Luss estates in support of the West Highland scheme, to Alexander MacDonald (“the uncrowned king of Skye”)^[30], who pressed the North British Company to extend the

West Highland line to Mallaig. And there is Nigel B. MacKenzie of Fort William, whose papers are a core of primary evidence.

Much was made of the need to improve mail and telegraph services, with the existing, unsatisfactory provision very fully described.

Mail does not reach Fort William until nearly 5 o'clock and unless letters are specially called for they are not delivered in all parts of the Town until nearly 7 o'clock. (It) is almost impossible to deal with business letters by return of post. (The) mail driver who has arrived at Invergarry at 10 p.m. and has ... not been able to get to bed after seeing to his horse etc. until 11.30 has to rise about 3 a.m. in order to drive to Fort William by 7.30^[31]

That all this turned on the Oban steamer, leaving early in the morning and returning late in the afternoon, was Fort William's particular grievance. The town had become a backwater and the trade of intermediate places was being carried to Oban.^[32] Fort Augustus was likewise ill-served. The mails arrived late, via Inverness and the Loch Ness steamer, which left again at 6 a.m. The Lord Abbot declared that he often sat up all night to reply to important letters.^[33] These complaints were combined with descriptions of circuitous and time-consuming journeys which discouraged travellers and inhibited enterprise. Malcolm's not infrequent business trips to Edinburgh required that he drive to Fort Augustus for the early steamer, connecting with the Highland Railway's midday train from Inverness via Forres and Perth; by 4 p.m., twelve hours after leaving Invergarry, he was no further south than Kingussie.^[34]

On the one hand it was recognised that David MacBrayne's steamers, along the west coast and through the Caledonian Canal, offered as generous a service as could be expected outwith the short tourist season. On the other hand, MacBrayne's monopoly charges were roundly attacked. As with the mails, this has left useful detail about the service as it was.^[35] For general merchandise, Fort William looked not just to MacBrayne but also to the regular Liverpool - Inverness steamers, while coal, drainage tiles, fencing materials and miscellaneous items arrived more haphazardly by coastal lighters. The lighters handled the great bulk of Ballachulish slate, and it was doubtful if any railway could offer competitive rates^[36]. Fort William's distillery traffic - grain, whisky, draff and coal, was more likely to transfer to rail.^[37] In the Hebrides the great complaint was that the existing railheads at Strome Ferry and Oban did not meet the case. The combined sea-and-rail times to London were not good enough to catch the first market for fresh or 'sprinkled' (lightly salted) fish. A Stornoway syndicate, finding MacBrayne's vessels and the chartered railway steamers alike unsatisfactory, had begun to run their own service to Fleetwood, tapping

the north-of-England market. Opinion was set on a new railhead south of Strome Ferry but north of Ardnamurchan, with a direct rail route to Glasgow and beyond^[38]. MacBrayne's response to the prospect of new railway competition can also be followed in some detail. His opposition was generally tactical, and he looked to the multiplication of rail-and-steamer circular tours to offset the loss of other traffic. He entered into agreements with the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway, against the possibility that Crinan would take on a new importance south of Oban, and with the West Highland Railway, for exchange of traffic at Fort William, Corpach and Roshven^[39]. In the longer run his company secured its position at Kyle of Lochalsh and Mallaig and benefited from improvements at Oban.

In the public mind telegraph and rail services went together. The fisherman could obtain reports on the movement of shoals and order up barrels, boxes, ice and salt from day to day.^[40] Shopkeepers could satisfy their customers while holding smaller stocks.^[41] Landowners and sporting tenants could arrange and rearrange their guest lists at short notice.^[42] Railway development might or might not be the business of the state, but it was a reproach to government that the telegraph network remained incomplete in the Islands into the 1880s.^[43] The Caledonian Railway took credit for offering the public access to the telegraph at stations on the Callander & Oban route; and similar facilities were sought along the West Highland route.^[44] By the 1890s telephone companies were seeking right-of-way along railways on the southern fringe of the Highlands, where residential development promised some demand for the new facility^[45]

Residential feuing in Strathendrick and along Loch Lomond, or by the Gareloch and Loch Long, entered into the calculations of all who planned new railways north from Glasgow into the Highlands.^[46] At Fort William, both Cameron of Lochiel and Mrs. Cameron-Campbell of Callart (feudal superior of the burgh) laid out new feuing roads in anticipation of the opening of the West Highland Railway.^[47] This was complemented by the burgh commissioners' ambitious plans for a new water supply and by the setting up of the Fort William Electric Lighting Company.^[48] It was predicted that "summer residences" would multiply in the Great Glen, Glen Spean, Nether Lochaber and Arisaig once a railway was in reach.^[49] Among the supporters of a branch line from Whistlefield to Portincaple were Glasgow house-builders who assured the North British Railway that there was much demand for property on Loch Goil.^[50] The Provost of Helensburgh anticipated further expansion of the town.^[51]

The railway families who settled along the route of the West Highland Railway have left a rich record. The West Highland Company felt obliged to charge the highest rents which the men would pay - higher than the North British Railway, the working company, set elsewhere in rural Scotland.^[52] A signalman at Garelochhead entered a mild protest.

The ... wage is 21/- per week and it must be very hard on a man with that income to pay £12 (rent), keep himself respectable and provide for wife and family.^[53]

The North British Railway's departmental officers were sometimes sympathetic.

It will never do to ask the surfacemen to pay 1/9 per week for house rent. It is with difficulty that they are persuaded to remain ... even with the rents at 1/3 ... The houses are as much in the interests of the Company as of the men, as without houses it would be an impossibility to get men for the proper maintenance of the road.^[54]

Local people along the West Highland Mallaig Extension were happy to combine crofting with work in the permanent way gangs^[55]. Other departments had found it hard to staff the Mallaig line ("We shall want 8 married signalmen and I cannot raise more than two .. ") because coal and provisions were so costly.^[56] It was recognised that married men "stay better", and they would lodge relief men when summer brought additional traffic^[57]. Beasdale private station was put in the care of a surface-man's wife.^[58]

The West Highland Railway was opened to Fort William before sufficient accommodation had been provided. Stationmasters' houses were finished as quickly as possible and wooden cottages were a stop-gap for surfacemen.^[59] Other grades had to improvise over many months. ("The Porter and Signalman at Rannoch, the Signalman and his wife and daughter at Spean Bridge, and the Signalman at Tulloch are still living in Waiting Rooms ..")^[60] The Fort William stationmaster objected to being housed in one of the remaining barracks at the old fort, but his objections were dismissed as "sentimental".^[61] His colleague at Rannoch, making the best of a damp and draughty hut left over from construction of the line, saw his wife fall ill and die. ("Jamieson has completely lost heart ... and is causing ... trouble ... with the rendering of his returns.")^[62] The stationmasters appointed to intermediate stations on the Mallaig Extension some six years later were much more ready to demand adequate houses, and on the whole management was more placatory, reflecting the change of attitude to be found across the railway industry in the 1890s.^[63] The pioneering West Highland railwaymen of the 1890s endured one to two years of makeshift dwellings. By 1902 their successors at Mallaig - in some cases the same families, were able to petition that the electric

light installation at the pier and loco-shed be extended to their tenement, for which they were ready to pay higher rent^[64].

Hoped-for traffic reflected late nineteenth Scotland in several ways. There were, it was said, promising outcrops of granite ideal for street setts. Birch would be in great demand for cotton bobbins, larch for railway sleepers, despite increasing competition from cheap imported woods^[65]. The theme of national efficiency, making the most of domestic resources, increasingly breaks in - not least in respect of the underdeveloped west coast fishery which could sustain the urban masses more healthily and more cheaply than chilled American meat.^[66] And on the West Highland Railway the Shandon Hydropathic Company looked to increasing English business with provision for boating, golf and other activities besides taking the waters.^[67] The leisure market embraced shooting lodges, circular tours and Sunday-school trips, in which connection the Garelochhead baker added his voice to those already pressing for a station at Whistlefield.

In consequence of the approaching season for Picnic and Excursion parties ... for which I have applications to purvey,... kindly inform me if I can get them landed (sic) by Rail at Whistlefield. The want of ... facilities ... has greatly handicapped my business ... as in ... Sunday School trips and the like ... they cannot get (children) to walk up the hill, and Whistlefield is where they want to go.^[68]

The MacKenzie Papers bring out the practical aspects of promoting a railway. There is much detail on organising public meetings and petitions in favour, preparing the books of reference and obtaining consents to compulsory purchase^[69]. By contrast, there are MacKenzie's efforts to discredit the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promotion, which the West Highland Railway opposed. MacKenzie and his allies had primed the press to support the West Highland. He now planted reports damaging to the Invergarry & Fort Augustus.^[70]

There is evidence that late Victorian Scotland readily drew parallels with Ireland both on the question of land policy in the Highlands and on the question of subsidised railways.

The Government have instituted through many of the districts in Ireland a scheme of light railways, constructed at a considerable expense, and the result has been highly satisfactory ... No one will ... grudge to Ireland this beneficial consideration .., but ... Ireland has received her full share of Government recognition .., and ... it is high time that Scotland should have some attention bestowed upon her long suffering and patient inhabitants.^[71]

The Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway, the Garve & Ullapool Railway and the West Highland

Railway as first proposed were all conceived as relatively 'light' lines - though not in the Irish or European sense of the word, nor in the sense eventually defined in the Light Railways Act of 1896. In backing the West Highland Mallaig Extension, the North British Railway sounded out whether the Board of Trade would "relax its requirements in thinly populated districts".^[72] All this is valuable background to the light railway movement at the end of the nineteenth century, which raised great hopes and achieved very little.

On all the new lines constructed in the Highlands there was increasing use of mass concrete. This was not unique to the Mallaig Extension; popular accounts can be misleading. But the great concrete viaducts at Glenfinnan, Lochnanuamh, Borrodale and Morar, and the enthusiastic advocacy of the contractor, Robert McAlpine, gave the Mallaig railway special importance.^[73] The completion as a single operation of 100 miles of new construction between Helensburgh and Fort William was unprecedented in the British Isles. Lucas & Aird tackled the contract very much as they had tackled the colonial projects on which the firm's reputation was founded. Accounts of construction of the West Highland Railway thus throw some light on the overseas contracting business, including engineers' careers and labour relations^[74]. Lucas & Aird's Fort William team, building south to Rannoch, was at first entirely isolated, all supplies being brought in by sea. The impact on the little town of Fort William is well documented^[75]. The old fort, already converted to houses, stables and workshops, was purchased by the West Highland Company as a general depot. Some houses were retained. As with the club-farms in Glen Spean, there is much information on the displaced tenants, their families and their employment; and this can be related to parliamentary plans and books of reference.^[76]

During the 1890s and 1900s the Scottish railway companies moved away from competition and towards rationalisation and retrenchment. In the 1880s the promoters of the Glasgow & North Western Railway were confident that they could exploit the rivalries of the Caledonian Railway, the North British and the Highland, so that one or more of them would take up the scheme. Fort William and Lochaber took it for granted that they could play off Caledonian and North British. ("We may add that, if your railway will not take the matter on, there can be no doubt that sooner or later another Company will.")^[77] But the prospect of a latter-day railway mania in the Highlands helped impel the Caledonian Railway and the North British to their Peace Agreement of 1891, while the Highland Company and the North British made and remade their Ten Years Truce (1889 and 1895) to avoid being drawn into wasteful warfare in the Great Glen. At officer level the old rivalries persisted, as when the North British Superintendent at Fort

William reported with great satisfaction that he had “stopped the coal from Caledonian pits” by persuading Sir John Stirling-Maxwell to obtain all his supplies from North British sources in Fife.^[78] But managers and directors were coming to know better. When the Highland Railway ceased to operate the Invergarry & Fort Augustus line and the North British moved in, the two chairmen exchanged sympathetic letters, agreeing that a hopelessly unprofitable branch - as the Fort Augustus line had become, had to be carried by one or other of the big Companies.^[79] By 1913 the North British Railway, unwilling to shoulder the cost of enlarging and protecting Mallaig harbour, inclined to a west coast pool which would spread the fish traffic over the Highland Railway’s Kyle of Lochalsh and the Caledonian’s Oban on a basis of shared receipts. This is discussed in Chapter 9. At the southern end of the West Highland route, the established Clyde Coast pool left the North British Company reluctant to sponsor new services which might antagonise the Caledonian and the Glasgow & South Western.

A wide range of published works has been used to contextualise this investigation. Relations between the railway companies and the state after c.1870 are thoroughly treated by Alderman (*The Railway Interest*, Bagwell (*The Railway Clearing House in the British Economy*) and Parris (*Government and the Railways in 19th century Britain*). Simmons’s *The Railway in England and Wales, 1830-1914** proved to be essential preliminary reading. Essays and articles dealing with more specific aspects of railway history are cited in full in the Bibliography.

*The intended two-volume approach was modified. There is, in effect, a second volume, entitled *The Railway in Town and Country*.

Legislation on safety, working hours, labour relations and fixed rates multiplied during the 1880s and 1890s, calling in question the traffic projections and estimates of working expenses on which the promoters of the West Highland Railway and other schemes founded their case. Traditional opposition to merger and monopoly persisted until 1914. The long term trend to amalgamation and other measures to offset statutory rate fixing was clear, but the Liberal Government of 1905-15 could not find a coherent policy.^[80] Arrangements which reduced but did not eliminate competition were acceptable, as when the Caledonian Railway, the Glasgow & South Western and the North British pooled their Clyde Coast traffic. Outright amalgamation was more hazardous, as in the unsuccessful attempt to merge the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland. It was in this climate that the North British Company began tentative negotiations for a west-of-Scotland fish traffic pool, as the alternative to further heavy outlay at Mallaig. Though

the Highland Railway and the North British both accepted state assistance, for Kyle of Lochalsh and for Mallaig respectively, the two Companies remained wary of the conditions which might be attached. The North British resisted the suggestion that the Treasury be represented on the board of the West Highland Railway. The ensuing compromise - annual inspection of the West Highland Mallaig Extension by the Board of Trade, is typical of this ambiguous period. These issues are fully examined in Chapters 5-7.

In the special conditions of the Scottish Highlands, the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway continued to employ a defence which companies elsewhere in mainland Britain had largely discarded. *Private risk for public advantage*^[81] was the underlying principle: a railway act was a bargain between the promoters and the state, in which the element of risk was recognised, and no government had the right to enforce what was really a new contract (i.e. regulations and controls). The expansion of railway legislation in the final quarter of the nineteenth century soon undermined these old arguments.^[82] In Scotland one variant endured. The Highland Company and the Callander & Oban submitted that theirs were 'optimum routes', deliberately designed to open up a backward and unrewarding region and, to that end, circuitous. Having endorsed these pioneering efforts, Parliament had a special duty to protect the two Companies from spoiling attack by schemes like the Glasgow & North Western and the West Highland. On the other hand, the promoters of these later projects could argue that the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban had not added the expected feeder lines and branches to their wandering main routes; they had defaulted, and public interest demanded that they face competition.

Writing in the 1880s and 1890s, Acworth pointed out that the great amalgamations of the 1860s, which enlarged the Caledonian Railway and the North British Railway, had made for ongoing parliamentary review, in almost every subsequent Scottish promotion, of the balance established between Caledonian and North British. The pattern of railway traffic within Scotland, and the pattern of Anglo-Scottish traffic, depended on the reciprocal running powers built in to the various amalgamation acts. Though not unique, the arrangement was exceptionally complex, and successive governments found themselves bound to maintain it or oversee any major change.^[83] Acworth also saw that the rivalry of Caledonian and North British, throughout the 1870s and 1880s, had made Scottish railway politics exceptionally febrile. The opportunity to amalgamate was missed - the combined company would have dominated Scotland. Thereafter mutual probing and manoeuvre persisted. The Caledonian Company sought to penetrate North British heartlands in Fife and the Borders and eventually forced the North British to share the traffic

of Dunbartonshire. The North British system was bound together by bridging Tay and Forth, and the Company sought to improve its position in the West by taking over the Glasgow & South Western Railway. This the Caledonian resisted.

The authorities cited above on the whole accept Acworth's picture. They use Scottish examples and draw Scottish parallels, but warn that Scotland was in some sense different. The period before and after the great amalgamations needs to be studied anew. It is unfortunate that **Robertson's** massive work (*The Origins of the Scottish Railway System, 1722-1844*) does not extend beyond mid-century. **Thomas's** various railway histories (see Bibliography) help a little, but they are unbalanced, superficial and fragmentary. There is a good deal to be said for the heavily detailed company histories of earlier date - **Williams's** *Midland Railway*, or **Tomlinson's** *North Eastern Railway*, which have no Scottish equivalent. They shed some useful light on Caledonian - North British rivalry as it affected the English Companies and on the North British Company's conflicting alliances with both East Coast and Midland partners. **Wrottesley's** more recent 3-volume account of the Great Northern Railway is similarly useful.

In any case, railway development in the Highlands cannot be understood without some appreciation of the situation which Acworth described. The Highland Company handled both Caledonian and North British traffic and traffic by all three Anglo-Scottish routes. It was a precarious arrangement which, it was generally accepted, tended to favour the Caledonian Railway and the Caledonian's West Coast partner, the London & North Western Railway. The Callander & Oban Railway was a Caledonian client and vulnerable to North British attack. New promotions in the Highlands might be highly speculative and dubiously profitable; but the climate which made them plausible affected Scotland as a whole. Fort William's enthusiasm for the West Highland Railway and Selkirk's enthusiasm for the Manchester, Newcastle & Glasgow Railway, an 1890s echo of 1840s schemes for a Clyde-and-Tweed trunk line, seem very much the same (save that Selkirk already had a branch line).^[84]

Joseph Mitchell's *Reminiscences* set the scene in the Highlands and provide a valuable, if partisan, account of the genesis of the Highland Railway. He should be read before turning to later studies concerned in one way or another with transport. These include **Dunlop** (*The British Fisheries Society, 1786-1893*), **Gray** (*The Fishing Industry of Scotland, 1790-1914*), **Haldane** (*The Drove Roads of Scotland, New Ways through the Glens and Three Centuries of Scottish Posts*), **Lindsay** (*The*

Canals of Scotland) and **Taylor** (*The Military Roads of Scotland*). All this is background to the repeated assertion of those who supported the Glasgow & North Western Railway, the West Highland Railway etc. that they were completing the vision of Thomas Telford.^[85] For Highland landowners, who in many cases affected to play the role which their predecessors had played in Telford's day, **Mitchell's** anecdotes and brief histories make a good beginning. **Spring's** new edition of **Bateman** (*The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*) gives useful support. **Coull** (*The Sea Fisheries of Scotland. A Historical Geography*) synthesises and reviews earlier discussions but says nothing new about rail transport on the west coast.

Conditions in the Highlands during the nineteenth century are covered by **Devine** (*The Great Highland Famine*), **Gray** (*The Highland Economy 1750-1850*), **Hunter** (*The Making of the Crofting Community*), **Slaven** (*The Development of the West of Scotland, 1750-1960*) and **Withers** (*Gaelic Scotland*). **Orr** (*Deer Forests, Landlords and Crofters*) deals more closely with the period after 1870. **Gordon** (*To Move with the Times*) deals with transport in relation to social and economic change in the Highlands but in a very general way.

There is broad agreement that, in so far as the mid-nineteenth century Highlands had seen some positive developments, these had run their course by the 1880s when agriculture and the west coast fishery faced new problems and political unrest returned. For agitation and its consequences, **Hunter** (above) can be supplemented by **MacPhail** (*The Crofters' War*) and by the essays and articles cited in the Bibliography. But treatment of the railway promotions, beginning with the Glasgow & North Western, which claimed to offer assistance to the crofting and fishing community, is patchy and, on occasion, inaccurate. There is no altogether satisfactory account of the debate over railway subsidy stemming from the Napier Commission's Report in 1884. **Cameron** (*Land for the people? Government and the Scottish Highlands, 1880-1925*) challenges some of Hunter's conclusions, and his framework lends itself to a better understanding of the subsidy question. The Liberals favoured fundamental reform of land tenure and were lukewarm or divided about other solutions, including state support for transport developments: the Conservatives (Unionists) looked to technocratic policies in order to avoid land reform, and these included subsidised transport.

Crofters' campaigners pointed to land policy in Ireland and to the state support which had assisted

railway development in Ireland. For the latter, **Conroy** (*A History of Railways in Ireland*) provides a comprehensive outline of the relevant legislation. Irish precedents and parallels raised the question whether local authorities should support light railways in association with the landed interest, as against a policy of central government subsidy for one or two conventional lines. **Pryde** (*Central and Local Government in Scotland*) and **Moody** (*Scottish Local History. An Introductory Guide*) outline the powers of the county councils established at the end of the nineteenth century. **Davies** (*Light Railways: their Rise and Decline*) is a thoroughly adequate general account. Popular histories by **Thomas**, **Vallance** and others include treatment of the light railways proposed for Skye and Lewis, besides examples on the mainland, some of which have attracted local studies. But an overall study for the Highlands is lacking.

Simmons has made it clear that railway development in the less promising areas of England and Wales, once the main network was established, depended on three factors - local determination, the possibility of persuading a reluctant railway company to take pre-emptive action (rather than see a rival build the line in question) and the possibility of speculative intervention (where outside interests joined with local interests to force the hand of existing companies.) This is, of course, over-simple. On occasion, a railway company might choose to further its ends through what appeared to be an independent local initiative or a speculative "contractors' line". And the companies learned how to make common cause against unwelcome promotions, so as not to be played off. Those which did not put some limit on loss-making competitive promotions eventually faced rebellion by shareholders. There is a good deal about the late nineteenth century railway promotion in the Highlands which fits this broad picture; but once again there is the question whether Scotland was indeed significantly different. A full study of, say, Charles Forman of Formans & McCall, engineers of the West Highland Railway, whose speculative bent was notorious, might answer many questions. And the part played by the great contracting firm of Lucas & Aird in the successful promotion of the West Highland deserves to be included in any general investigation of "contractors' lines".

Existing essays by **Vamplew** (*Railway Investment in the Scottish Highlands*) and **Robertson** (*The Cheap Railway Movement in Scotland: the St. Andrews Railway and The Marquis of Breadalbane and the Scottish Grand Junction Railway*) show where such research might begin. They also point up the role of the great landowners and the Lowland (besides Irish) ancestry of the light railway movement as it eventually touched the Highlands. **Pollins's** essay (*Railway Contractors and the finance of railway*

development in Britain) stands by itself; but the reader infers that further study, carried into the later years of the nineteenth century and into Scotland, would lead to the Glasgow & North Western promotion and so to the West Highland. **Sinclair's** essay (*The Aviemore Line: Railway Politics in the Highlands 1882-98*) also stands alone. In period and intention, it prefigured the research undertaken here. Sinclair argues strongly and convincingly that the largely barren battles between the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland discredited their traditional landed directorates and autocratic general managers, accelerating the trend to more professional management and rationalisation. A similar study of the internal politics of the North British Railway is badly needed and would illuminate the North British decision to expand into the Highlands.

Beyond the immediate confines of this investigation, **Bonavia** (*The Four Great Railways and Railway Policy between the Wars*) offers a thoughtful appreciation of the consequences, had 'Grouping' in the 1920s brought all the Scottish Companies together. Developments in the Highlands were tending in that direction before 1914, and it is arguable that the preferred option, whereby Scotland became part 'LNER' and part 'LMS' turned out to be the wrong decision. Other material relating to this debate is cited in the Bibliography.

Works which have proved useful but defy neat classification include **Biddle** (*The Railway Surveyors*), **Childers** (*Robert McAlpine: a Biography*) and **Kennedy** (*The Birth and Death of a Highland Railway*). Biddle explains the imperatives of preparing and lodging a railway bill and the risks of ambush on technicalities. Childers enhances the picture of McAlpine, as another contractor whom Formans & McCall cultivated. Kennedy began his engineering career on the Callander & Oban Railway's Ballachulish branch. Overall, a wide secondary field had to be covered, both to set the scene and to focus questions. Primary material was very much limited to the railway holdings of the Scottish Record Office and the MacKenzie Papers; but the former are complex and voluminous and the latter would be fragmentary without them.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

- ¹ The Great North of Scotland Railway, like the other Scottish railway companies, is covered in the general works cited in the Bibliography. For the double assault on Inverness by the Glasgow & North Western Railway and the Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Junction Railway, see N.T. Sinclair, 'The Aviemore Line: Railway Politics in the Highlands 1882-98'.
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/62
Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Junction Railway Bill, 1883-4, Petitions Against Speech by counsel, Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Junction Railway Bill, Commons, 6 May 1884
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/326
Highland Railway (New Lines) Bill, 1883-4, and Highland Railway (Northern Lines Amalgamation) Bill, 1883-4, Petitions Against by the Caledonian Railway, the East Coast Companies, the Great North of Scotland Railway, the Midland Railway and the North British Railway
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/328
Great North of Scotland Railway (New Lines) Bill, 1883-4, Petitions Against by the East Coast Companies and the Highland Railway
SRO/RHP 25442
Plans of the rival cut-off routes between Strathspey and Inverness, 1883-4
- ² G. Dow, The Story of the West Highland
C. Hamilton-Ellis, The North British Railway, Chapter 9
J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway
- ³ WHM
MacKenzie Papers
SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
West Highland Railway Minutes, 20 August 1889 and 30 March 1893
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Testimonial dinner for N.B. MacKenzie, Fort William, 1912-3
- ⁴ SRO/SPC/9/1 and 2
Conacher Papers
- ⁵ O'Dell Collection, Aberdeen University Library
- ⁶ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9, Petition Against by the Scottish Rights of Way and Recreation Society
- ⁷ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/378
West Highland Railway (Inverness Extension) Bill, 1894-5, as amended in committee, Clauses 4 and 9
- ⁸ PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
West Highland Railway Act, 1896, First Schedule Ch. ccxix, 59 and 60 Vict.
- ⁹ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1-7 and SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1-8
- ¹⁰ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Donald P. MacDonald, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
- ¹¹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
F.N. Menzies, tenant farmer and secretary of the Highland Agricultural Society, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
- ¹² SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
William Arnott, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to John Conacher, General Manager of the North British Railway, 5 August 1895

- 13 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
James Carswell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Conacher, explaining the limitations of the layout at Fort William, 14 April 1894
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Arnott to Conacher, reporting on facilities required at intermediate stations on the line to Mallaig, 1 March 1897
- 14 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Correspondence re through working of family saloon between Fort William and Manchester, for Lord Howard of Glossop, October 1894
- 15 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Ranald MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 28 March 1889
- 16 SRO/RHP 46438 and 2185-6
WHM
N.B. MacKenzie's correspondence, on behalf of the West Highland Railway, with the crofting tenants in Glen Spean. Only random items survive.
- 17 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Dr. Donald MacGregor M.P., Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894, and Lords, 12 July 1894
- 18 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lord Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
- 19 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
George Malcolm to J. Gibson, Secretary of the Caledonian Railway, 16 May 1888, quoted by counsel during Malcolm's Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889.
- 20 SRO/RHP 47391
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 2 July 1889
- 21 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Agreement between Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and the West Highland Railway Company, 17(?) March 1893
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4, Petition Against by Mrs. Gertrude S. Nicholson of Arisaig
(To secure equal treatment alongside the neighbouring proprietor, Mrs. Cameron-Head of Inverailort. The Nicholsons supported the Mallaig Extension.)
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/loose
Traffic Notice re opening of the West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, including facilities for "Sporting Parties" at Lechavue, North British Railway, March 1901
- 22 SRO/BR/WEH/4/4
Correspondence re renaming of "Inverlair" as "Tulloch", May-July 1894
See especially A. MacDonald to N.B. MacKenzie, prohibiting further work on The MacKintosh's land, 8 June 1894
- 23 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3
Conacher to G. Gow, hotelier, Dunalister Hotel, Kinlochrannoch, 15 August 1894
- 24 SRO/BR/IFA/1/1
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 16 April 1896
SRO/BR/IFA/4/1
Keydens, Strang and Girvan, agents for the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters, to Brodie and Sons, agents for the Ellice Trustees, 13 February 1896
Keydens, Strang and Girvan to Malcolm, 22 February 1896

- 25 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Marquess of Breadalbane to Conacher, 28 February 1894
See also Breadalbane to Conacher, 23 October and 16 December 1893
- 26 WHR
Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, March 1890
- 27 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Breadalbane to William Jackson, General Manager of the North British Railway, 25 May 1903
See also Jackson to Breadalbane, 2 June 1903.
- 28 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Breadalbane to Conacher, 26 October and 19(?) November 1895
- 29 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 3980 1884
Report... into the condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Section V and Appendix C (Napier Commission)
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Malcolm, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894
See also W. Orr, Deer Forests, Landlords and Crofters, pages 35-6, 85, 110, 135
- 30 I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, page 78
- 31 WHM
Ewen Cameron, agent of the National Bank, Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 32 WHM
Donald Boyd, general merchant, Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 33 WHM
Leo Linse, Lord Abbot of Fort Augustus, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 34 WHM
Malcolm, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 35 Description and criticism of MacBrayne's services in the various Proofs for the West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9 can be compared with MacBrayne's Sailings for October 1886, showing connections with the Callander & Oban Railway and with the Highland Railway
SRO/BR/CAL/4/24/14
See also Heads of Agreement between the Highland Railway Company and Mr. David MacBrayne
SRO/BR/HR/3/6/1
- 36 WHM
Boyd, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 37 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
D.P. MacDonald, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
- 38 WHM
Michael MacNeill, fisherman and fish curer, Barra, Proof for the West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
Captain Thomas A. Swinburne of Eilean Shona, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 3980 1884
Report of the Napier Commission
For the Fleetwood syndicate, see J. MacKenzie, manager of the Stornoway Fish Carrying Company (Fleetwood Company) to A. Robertson, District Superintendent, Dundee, North British Railway, 19 August 1900 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8

- 39 SRO/BR/CAC/3/1
Arrangement between the Promoters of the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway and David MacBrayne, 14 July 1887
WHM
Heads of Agreement between the West Highland Railway and David MacBrayne, draft, undated
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Conacher, Memorandum re arrangements with MacBrayne for steamer connections with the West Highland Railway at Fort William and Banavie, 25 September 1893
- 40 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 6138 1890
Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission (Lothian Commission)
- 41 WHM
Boyd, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
Archibald MacFarlane, general merchant, Spean Bridge, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 42 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
The MacKintosh, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
Sir Robert Menzies of Rannoch, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889
- 43 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 6138 1890
Report of the Lothian Commission
- 44 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Breadalbane to Conacher, 31 August 1895
See also Breadalbane to Conacher, 7 August 1895
See also Proofs for West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/372
- 45 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
A.F. Clement, Signal and Telegraph Superintendent of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 18 November 1892
- 46 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Speech by counsel, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 30 April 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Captain Roderick Colquhoun (Luss Trustees), Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
John Tawse (Tawse and Bonar, representing the Luss Trustees), Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
See also proposed Gareloch & Loch Long District Railway, 1883
North British Railway Minutes, 1 November 1883 SRO/BR/NBR/1/30
- 47 WHM
Peter MacFarlane, provost of Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
- 48 WHM
MacFarlane, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Minutes of the Fort William Electric Lighting Company
- 49 WHM
Alexander Craig, factor for the Lochtreighead Estate, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
N. B. MacKenzie, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Lord Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
- 50 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
W.G. Kirkwood, builders, Partick, to Conacher, 9 December 1894 and 19 February 1896

- 51 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Alexander Breingan, banker and businessman, Provost of Helensburgh, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
- 52 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
David Deuchars, Superintendent of the Line, North British Railway, to Conacher, 5 May 1896
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Jackson to Deuchars, 9 November 1900
- 53 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
J. Currie, signalman, to Deuchars, 8 April 1896
- 54 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
James Bell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Jackson, 14 May 1901
- 55 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Clement to Jackson, 15 April 1901
- 56 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
George Innes, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to Deuchars, 22 September 1900
- 57 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3
J.B. Shedden, stationmaster, Shandon, to G. Cunninghame, District Superintendent, Glasgow, North British Railway, undated
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Deuchars to Conacher, 5 May 1896
- 58 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Conacher to George Wieland, sometime Secretary of the West Highland Railway, 5 November 1898
- 59 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
W. Jamieson, stationmaster, Rannoch, to Arnott, 4 March 1895
J. Blackwood, stationmaster, Fort William, to Conacher, 7 December 1895
James Carswell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 1 and 10 August 1894
Conacher to Wieland, 19 September 1894
Conacher to Carswell, 21 September 1894
- 60 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
Deuchars to Conacher, 17 October 1895
- 61 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
Arnott to Conacher, 15 December 1895
- 62 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
Deuchars to Conacher, 17 October 1895
- 63 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Deuchars to Conacher, 20 May 1899
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/4
Deuchars to Jackson, 9 October 1899
- 64 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/4
“Servants and Tenants occupying the Company’s houses, Victoria Place, Mallaig”, petition “to have the Electric Light”, 22 May 1902
- 65 WHM
Archibald MacFarlane, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
Malcolm, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9

- 66 WHM
Prospectus of the Normal Food Company, successor to the Highland Fisheries Company, Barra, 1886
For the collapse of the Barra fish factory and the prospects of any similar operation, see Professor Cosser Ewart, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
See also Report of the Napier Commission PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS c. 3980 1884
- 67 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
J.C. Reid, manager of Shandon Hydropathic, to MacRae, Flett and Rennie, agents for the West Highland Railway, 29 June 1894
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Conacher, 30 June 1894
- 68 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
S.H. Moir, baker, Garelochhead, to Conacher, 5 March 1896
- 69 WHM
Drafts and fair copies of letters, notices, petitions, etc., relating to the proposed West Highland Railway north of Crianlarich, 1888-9
(Advice and examples, including copies of the Eaglesham Railway prospectus of 1887, were sent to MacKenzie by MacRae, Flett & Rennie.)
- 70 SRO/BR/IFA/4/1
Keydens, Strang & Girvan, to MacKenzie, 12 and 16 March 1896
See also MacKenzie's memorandum on the promoters of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, June (?) 1896 WHM
- 71 'T.D.R.', The Scotsman, 13 October 1894
- 72 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Conacher to James Renton, director of the West Highland Railway, 8 August 1894
- 73 J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, Chapter 6
D. Kennedy, The Birth and Death of a Highland Railway, pages 64-7
- 74 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Account of Lord Burton's journey over the unfinished West Highland Railway (press cuttings), October 1893
"The West Highland Railway, a journey over the line", Dundee Courier and Argus, 14 April 1894
- 75 SRO/BR/WEH/4/3
Album of photographs recording the construction of the West Highland Railway
(See also bound volume of photographs presented to the Marchioness of Tweeddale at the opening of the West Highland Railway, 11 August 1894. Tweeddale family records)
- 76 WHM
Notes for 'book of reference', Railway No. 2 (Crianlarich-Fort William), Railway No. 3 (Fort William-Roshven) and Railway No. 6 (Fort William foreshore), West Highland Railway, 1888-9
- 77 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Petition of Lochaber landowners and others to the Caledonian Railway, October-December 1887, quoted by counsel during Cameron of Lochiel's Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
- 78 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
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- 79 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1198
William Whitelaw, Chairman of the Highland Railway, to Earl of Dalkeith, Chairman of the North British Railway, 1 January 1907
- 80 G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, pages 195-218
- 81 The motto of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, 1825

- 82 G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, Chapter 2
H. Parris, Government and the Railways in Nineteenth Century Britain, pages 211-29
- 83 W.M. Acworth, The Railways of Scotland, pages 65-82
- 84 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1209
Conacher's correspondence and notes re the proposed Manchester, Newcastle & Glasgow Railway
- 85 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
For example:-
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Chapter 2

The West Highland Railway: background, to c.1885

Chapter 2

As a prelude to examination of the West Highland Railway this Chapter surveys railway development in the Scottish Highlands from the 1840s to the 1880s. It includes the consolidation of the Scottish railway system into five main companies, the Glasgow & North Western project of 1882-3 and the Report of the Napier Commission (1884). It also sketches the history of state assistance for railways in Ireland.

To read any clear pattern into the railway promotions of the 1840s is foolhardy. In so far as 'Mania' schemes touched the Highlands, it appeared that Inverness would be linked to the emergent national network via Aberdeen and via Glasgow. The Aberdeen interest planned lines both south to Dundee and Perth and west to Inverness. The Glasgow interest wanted a direct route to the North. The Aberdeen promotions were related and seemed to promise eventual amalgamation and monopoly north-of-Tay. It is difficult to disentangle the rival north-of-Clyde schemes, but they all aimed at Crianlarich, then variously the Tay valley, the Great Glen and the west coast. The Caledonian Railway, having joined Edinburgh and Glasgow with Carlisle, was expected to influence and perhaps control both the Stirling-and-Perth route provided by the Scottish Central Railway and any 'direct' line north from Glasgow. And a line westwards from the Scottish Central, meeting the 'direct' line at Crianlarich, would confirm the Caledonian Company's grip.

But the Aberdeen interest fractured. The Great North of Scotland Railway (a title which preserved the memory of early ambitions) remained in possession of Aberdeenshire and Banff. Southward there were piecemeal promotions, subsequently united into the Scottish North Eastern Railway, which linked with the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway and with the Scottish Central. The Forth and Tay estuaries were as yet unbridged; through traffic went via Stirling and Perth. As for the 'direct' (or 'westerly') route to the North, very little survived the crisis which ended the first expansionist drive of the Caledonian Company. The Caledonian & Dumbartonshire Railway, putative stem of a trunk line into the Highlands, reached no further than Balloch. It was absorbed by the Glasgow & Helensburgh Company, which then fell to the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway.

The North British Railway (Edinburgh-to-Berwick, Edinburgh-to-Hawick and, subsequently, Carlisle), the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee and the Edinburgh & Glasgow preserved an uneasy independence, all more or less vulnerable to the predations of the Caledonian Railway and the (English) North Eastern

Railway. The Forth & Clyde Junction Railway, linking Stirling and Balloch, gave the Edinburgh & Glasgow an additional route into Fife (via Alloa); it also offered the Scottish Central and the Caledonian additional access to the north bank of the Clyde. In sum, the railways of the Central Belt, Fife and the North East remained looseknit, and Inverness remained isolated. Amalgamations were inevitable, with implications for future promotions into the Highlands; but there were several possible permutations.

Early schemes to penetrate the central Highlands, from Strathearn or north along the Tay, in the end produced only the Scottish Central's Crieff branch and the Perth & Dunkeld Railway. More ambitious was Joseph Mitchell's Spey-and-Tay route, conceived as a trunk line from Inverness to the South, which Parliament rejected in favour of the longer route via Aberdeen. But the Great North of Scotland Railway halted at Huntly. The Inverness interest used the interval to promote lines east to Nairn, then on to Keith, and north to Dingwall and Bonar Bridge. When the Great North advanced to Keith and Elgin, a through route via Aberdeen came into being. Beyond Bonar Bridge the 'Far North' Companies (Sutherland Railway, Duke of Sutherland's Railway and Sutherland & Caithness Railway) reached Wick and Thurso. The Great North could not control these developments. Instead the Inverness companies revived Mitchell's Spey-and-Tay scheme, now styled the 'Inverness & Perth Junction Railway', striking south from Forres and absorbing the Dunkeld line which had been worked by the Scottish North Eastern. At Perth the Scottish Central and the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee offered Glasgow, Edinburgh and English connections. By 1865 the Inverness companies had all come together as the 'Highland Railway', save for the 'Far North' lines which, on paper at least, kept their separate identities until 1884.

Among the 'westerly' promotions of the 1840s, the 'Scottish Grand Junction Railway' alone obtained an act. This authorised a reduced version - Loch Lomond-to-Oban, of the original scheme, which had set out to link both Stirling and Glasgow (the latter by the Loch Lomond steamers) with Oban, Killin and the North. The Grand Junction's northern arm went by Rannoch and Loch Erich to join Mitchell's route at Dalwhinnie^[1]. When the Spey-and-Tay line again took shape, the Inverness party wanted no 'westerly' ties; the Dalwhinnie link or any equivalent - say, by Fort William and the Great Glen, was to be discouraged^[2]. Inverness likewise resisted proposals for a line from Strathmore by Deeside to Moray, by-passing Aberdeen^[3]. The Highland Company, once united, sought to establish that the Forres-Perth route was Parliament's preferred 'optimum' artery, channelling all the traffic of the North and giving the North East an alternative to the Great North of Scotland Railway. And the Highland directors would not

support Hope-Scott of Loch Shiel and other Lochaber landowners who wanted a Fort William and west coast branch from Newtonmore^[4]. Mitchell favoured the Dingwall & Skye Railway, completed to Strome Ferry in 1870 and taken over by the Highland Railway ten years later, whereby west coast traffic went by Inverness^[5].

The Callander & Oban Railway, authorised in 1865, revived the east-west element of the Scottish Grand Junction scheme. The Dunblane, Doune & Callander Railway, a Scottish Central subsidiary, provided the stem. As a western projection of the Scottish Central, the Oban line scarcely touched the territory claimed by the Highland Company, save that Oban might eventually compete with Strome Ferry; and the Callander & Oban promoters had their own claim to 'optimum' status.

The interests both of the Shareholders and of the Public make it desirable that (the railway) should be so laid out as to reach as many different points ... as possible, and (it) has been designed with that view. It is the shortest practicable route to Edinburgh and the East of Scotland, it traverses extensive and important districts of Perthshire. A shorter route to Glasgow could have been obtained, but only at the expense of depriving that city ... of communication with these ... districts of Perthshire, and of ... increasing the distance from Oban and all other points on the Line to the Northern and Eastern Counties^[6].

The Inverness party secured a far flung regional monopoly. The compact Great North of Scotland Railway was not a parallel case. The North British in the South East, confined by the Caledonian, conceded through running powers between Newcastle and Edinburgh to the North Eastern Company. Fife was dominated by the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway, which finally merged with the North British; this strengthened the latter but did not end Caledonian attacks. The Glasgow & South Western Railway was at odds with the Caledonian south-of-Clyde and shared the Carlisle-Stranraer route with the Caledonian and two English partners, the London & North Western and the Midland. Inverness escaped the faction which had divided the Aberdeen interest. Local enterprise, including the Caledonian Bank, together with the landed proprietors sustained the careful sequence of promotions which made the Highland Railway. In Mitchell the Company found an engineer in the Telford tradition, who believed that Telford's programme had devolved to the railway promoters. But the Highland Railway had limited resources. Year-round traffic grew slowly; seasonal peaks boosted revenue yet imposed added costs. Unless challenged, the Company was unlikely to encourage marginal branches and feeder lines. Without them, however, monopoly was that much more difficult to justify. The plea of 'optimum route' implied that additional feeders would be developed as soon as possible.

In the case of the Callander & Oban Railway, which became a client of the Caledonian when the Caledonian absorbed the Scottish Central, the promised 'optimum route' was long awaited. Construction halted at Glenoglehead and then at Tyndrum. Oban was not reached until 1880. Feeder lines had been planned in the 1860s. Malcolm of Poltalloch commissioned a survey from Dalnally south by Loch Awe; MacLean of Ardgour did likewise for the Linnhe coast north from Connel Ferry to Fort William^[7]. In the meantime these projects languished. A narrow gauge line from Tyndrum by Glen Coe to Fort William was lodged for the parliamentary session 1873-4, but did not proceed^[8].

With a route to the North sufficiently 'direct' for the 1860s and 1870s, the Highland Railway had a uniquely commanding position in country which did not immediately invite spoiling attack. On the other hand water transport continued to compete for the Company's traffic^[9]. A 'westerly' assault was unlikely while the Callander & Oban Railway lay unfinished: there would be no feeder reaching into Lochaber, whence the Great Glen led on temptingly to Inverness.

The delays which afflicted the Callander & Oban made for talk - if only talk, of reactivating the 'Mania' schemes for a direct line north from Glasgow. On the Highland Company's eastern flank there was attrition. The Great North of Scotland Railway had a title of sorts to the territory between Aberdeen and Inverness and regarded as interim the agreement of the 1850s which had established the Highland Railway at Elgin and Keith. The two Companies marched uncomfortably from the Moray coast to the middle reaches of the Spey. The Great North wanted, if not independent access to Inverness, then facilities and running powers.

In 1882-3 the 'Glasgow & North Western Railway', the first comprehensive 'westerly' promotion for thirty years, was defeated in Parliament. In 1883-4 came the Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Railway, coupled with a Great North bill for a Strathspey-to-Inverness cut-off. These promotions promised a new route from Aberdeen to Inverness, with the possibility of another cut-off from Strathmore to the Dee which would capture additional traffic. Much of the Highland Railway's Perth traffic, the core of the Company's revenue, would be diverted to the new Strathspey cut off. The Great North offered joint ownership. This, and not an expensive and doubtfully worthwhile Spey-and-Dee link, was the Aberdeen Company's real concern^[10]. Agitation for a third railhead on the west coast, additional to Strone Ferry

and Oban, was a complicating factor. The Glasgow & North Western promoters promised to make Ballachulish a fishing harbour; they pledged to build an Arisaig branch as soon as possible^[11]. And both the Glasgow & North Western and the Great North, once at Inverness, would be able to claim a say in any scheme in the remote North West.

The expansionist policy of the Great North of Scotland Company in the 1880s and 1890s lies outwith the present study, save that it put pressure on the Highland Railway. The Glasgow & North Western scheme is examined more fully later in this Chapter. In self-defence the Highland Company reluctantly promoted the Aviemore-to-Inverness cut-off, on the same alignment as the rival Great North promotion. Approved in 1884, the Aviemore line was not completed until 1898^[12]. New branch lines and light railways were encouraged, as modest but plausible proof that the Company recognised the responsibilities of monopoly. There were improvements at Strone Ferry, with arrangements to buoy and light Loch Carron^[13]. The Far North lines (Bonar Bridge to Wick and Thurso) were finally gathered in, lest any invader tried to assert a joint interest^[14]. Other defensive possibilities included extension of the Dingwall & Skye Railway to Kyle of Lochalsh, the terminus originally intended, and pre-emptive occupation of the Great Glen with an Inverness - Fort William branch.

The Highland Railway made a virtue of being centred at Inverness, where offices and locomotive works contributed to the local economy^[15]. The Callander & Oban Railway, worked by the Caledonian, did not offer direct employment on the same scale. But the Callander & Oban should not be seen simply as a Caledonian appendage. The Company's pretensions echoed those of the Highland Railway, as the prospectus shows. Oban and, more generally, the western Highlands would be linked advantageously with the rest of Scotland. Rail traffic between east and west included livestock wintering and returning and distillery barley from the Mearns. There were those who believed that Oban could become a centre for imported timber and that bunkering provision, with Fife coal, would attract Irish and even trans-Atlantic steamers. But Oban wanted above all a Glasgow connection, and Glasgow - Oban traffic became the largest item of passenger revenue when the route was completed^[16].

The Oban party was dismayed by the Caledonian Company's decision to delay construction beyond Tyndrum. In the mid-1870s Tyndrum was a general railhead; coaches ran to Oban and to Ballachulish. Oban's discontent can be traced back to the original promotion, when it had been a fine decision whether

to go east to Callander and the Scottish Central Railway or to turn south at Crianlarich. The latter implied an arrangement with the Forth & Clyde Junction Company and the Edinburgh & Glasgow Company, for access to Glasgow via Loch Lomond or Aberfoyle. Amalgamation gave the Scottish Central, and therefore the Callander & Oban, to the Caledonian. Amalgamation also gave the Forth & Clyde Junction, the Edinburgh & Glasgow and other lesser lines north-of-Clyde to the North British Railway, which thereafter faced the Caledonian on a more equal footing*. The key amalgamations of the 1860s and their consequences for the Highlands will receive further attention. It need only be noted here that the existing lines to Helensburgh, to Balloch and to Strathblane became North British. Any subsequent promotion of a 'direct' Oban-to Glasgow line was almost certain to involve the North British Company. The risk of such a project impelled the Caledonian to resecure the original powers of the Callander & Oban and complete the route west of Tyndrum^[17].

*For simplicity, the companies fully absorbed into the North British Railway are not distinguished from those leased or worked.

In the 1880s attention turned to a possibility of a cut-off. Just as the Aberdeen interest asserted that access to Inverness for the Great North of Scotland Railway was in the spirit of Parliament's intentions, so it was argued that Parliament did not intend the roundabout route from Glasgow to Oban via Callander to be final^[18]. That the Callander & Oban Company, like the Highland Company, showed little urgency in the matter of feeder lines was another argument. A short branch to Killin was proposed in 1881 but would not open until 1886. By comparison with the Highland Railway, in possession for nearly twenty years, the Callander & Oban might be given benefit of doubt and an interval to build up core traffic. The question was, with Oban developing rapidly, whether a Glasgow cut-off was already justifiable. There were plans to extend the Helensburgh line along the Gareloch, and perhaps to Arrochar on Loch Long, within twenty miles of Crianlarich^[19]. The Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway, which continued the Blane Valley line and connected with the Forth & Clyde Junction, was opened in 1882, worked by the North British. The Aberfoyle Company then promoted an extension by Inversnaid to Crianlarich, but this was overtaken by the grandiose Glasgow & North Western scheme^[20].

The Glasgow & North Western Railway was to run by the eastern edge of Loch Lomond, Crianlarich and Glen Coe to Fort William, then by the Great Glen to Inverness^[21]. It was laid out to intersect the Forth & Clyde Junction Railway near Drymen and to make a spur connection with the Callander & Oban

Railway at Tyndrum. Entry to Glasgow was by Milngavie and Maryhill. In Glen Coe the line was carried high on the mountain wall, descending to Loch Leven at the Dog Narrows and doubling back on the northern shore. Ballachulish traffic, passenger, slate and fish, was to be ferried to Callart. The relatively easy sections, between Glasgow and Loch Lomond and through the Great Glen, would be finished first, encouraging Glasgow "residential" use at the southern end of the route and giving Lochaber a rail link with Inverness at the northern end. The exacting central section between Glen Falloch and Glen Coe would be added later. The Highland Railway and the Caledonian were alike threatened. The new route to the North would be at least thirty miles shorter than the Perth-Forres-Inverness trunk line. Strome Ferry was some 270 miles from Glasgow. With a new railhead west of Fort William, the distance from the coast to the Central Belt might be reduced to 140 miles. Ballachulish was unlikely to rival Oban as a fishing port, but at Ballachulish, Corran Ferry and Fort William the Glasgow & North Western would capture much of the traffic which David MacBrayne's steamers carried to Oban. The Tyndrum spur would divert Glasgow - Oban traffic to the 'direct' Loch Lomond line.

The Glasgow & North Western scheme has received little attention. Popular histories assume that it was welcomed if not inspired by the North British Company and treat it as the precursor of the West Highland Railway^[22]. There is no doubt that the Highland Company and the Caledonian made common cause to defeat the Glasgow & North Western. That they did not maintain the same united opposition to the West Highland scheme partly explains why the latter succeeded. But the North British directors did not offer the Glasgow & North Western the support which they later offered the West Highland. In particular, they refused the promoters' request for a guarantee^[23].

The first draft of the Glasgow & North Western Bill, inviting support from the Scottish Companies generally and from English Companies handling Scottish traffic, was pared down to a clause empowering the North British both to work and to guarantee the new railway. Andrew Dougall, Secretary and General Manager of the Highland Railway, pressed John Walker, General Manager of the North British, not to imperil "friendly relations" at Perth, where the North British, as successor to the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway, exchanged traffic with the Highland Company^[24]. Walker complained that the Highland Railway was in thrall to the Caledonian, which had absorbed both the Scottish Central Company and the Scottish North Eastern. For access to Perth over Caledonian (formerly Scottish North Eastern) track, the Highland Railway paid toll; it was an open secret that the toll would be waived as long as the Caledonian

and the Caledonian's English partner, the London & North Western, were favoured in respect of through traffic. This disadvantaged the North British and the English Companies allied to the North British - the Great Northern, North Eastern and Midland Railways.

If the Agreement of 1866 had not been entered into ...; if the Highland Railway had been as open to us as to the Caledonian and the traffic of both treated impartially then we should not have countenanced any Line competing with yours. (I) cannot understand why (the Highland) Company ... should, for the sake of £5,000 a year, sacrifice its independence^[25].

Although Walker assured Dougall that the North British did not stand behind the Glasgow & North Western, he also warned that "you cannot expect us to reject an independent route to Inverness when it is presented to us"^[26]. At the very least Walker hoped to extract better facilities at Perth. Much was made, when the Glasgow & North Western Bill came to Parliament, of the injustice and inconvenience which the North British encountered there. Relations were strained. Sir James Falshaw, chairman of the North British, feared that he would be unable to continue as a Highland director^[27]. However, in June, 1883, after the Glasgow & North Western Bill had been rejected, the two Companies renewed their Perth traffic agreement^[28].

The Glasgow & North Western promoters certainly calculated that their scheme would reorder Anglo-Scottish traffic partnerships; and the Highland Railway, handling English traffic by all existing routes, had most to lose. There were hints that the Midland Railway, which had much influence over the Glasgow & South Western and some influence over the North British, was well-disposed to the new route; these hints grew when the promoters announced that the Glasgow & South Western Company would accommodate them at Glasgow St.Enoch. The North British was ready to resist proposals for a direct connection between the Glasgow & North Western and the Caledonian main line to Carlisle. The London & North Western Railway, the Great Northern and the North Eastern all wanted safeguards, should either the Caledonian or the North British take up the Glasgow & North Western scheme. As for internal Scottish traffic, although the Highland Railway's treaty with the Caledonian held firm, it was not impossible that the promoters would win Caledonian support, at least in so far as would protect the Callander & Oban Company. The North British Company might or might not seize the offer of a 'westerly' route to Fort William and Inverness. The offer of a Loch Lomond route to Oban was likely to be more attractive, and the Caledonian, in self defence, was bound to demand at least joint control of the new line in respect of Oban traffic. Oban apart, the Glasgow & North Western offered the Caledonian a foothold in North

British territory north-of-Clyde. As a precaution, Walker insisted that the promoters delete the southernmost portion of their route (Maryhill-to-Drymen) and settle for access to Glasgow via Balloch and Dumbarton, at this date securely North British. Negotiations were complicated by the need to allow for increasing traffic on the Glasgow, City & District Railway, another North British subsidiary, and by the impending partition of the City of Glasgow Union Railway between the North British Company and the Glasgow & South Western^[29].

The promoters argued that their scheme must be achieved in its entirety (though perhaps in stages) if the Highlands were to be best served. In fact they sought such support as could be found. Pending a working agreement, the North British was offered running powers to Tyndrum, ostensibly in return for use of Glasgow Queen Street. This suggests that the promoters were more hopeful of embroiling Caledonian and North British over the cut off route to Oban than of inveigling one or the other to support new construction to Fort William and Inverness. The Highland Company might have been persuaded to endorse the Great Glen section, so that Fort William became another Perth, where the Highland shared through traffic with the Caledonian or the North British, while Inverness remained inviolate. But in that case the Great North of Scotland Company was sure to demand through facilities to Fort William, Oban and Glasgow via the Great Glen. The Highland Railway might hold the southern Companies at Fort William, only to see Inverness fall to a flank attack. When the Glasgow & North Western Bill faced defeat in late May, 1883, the promoters entered a special plea that the Commons Committee reconsider a modified scheme “from Fort William down to Tyndrum, and to (Ardlui), just at the head of Loch Lomond”. If the Fort William line was approved, an “extension to Arisaig” would be lodged for the following parliamentary session^[30]. This was a clear appeal to the Caledonian Railway: the Callander & Oban Company would acquire a Loch Lomond branch, a feeder line to Lochaber and a second railhead on the west coast, all tributary to the Caledonian. But the promoters may well have calculated on North British intervention: with a link line from Balloch or Helensburgh to Ardlui, the North British could claim a share of Oban, Fort William and Arisaig traffic over the reduced Glasgow & North Western.

In short, the Glasgow & North Western was not simply a stalking horse for the North British. It was a speculative “contractors' line”, setting Company against Company. But it taught lessons to those who, some five years later, successfully promoted the West Highland Railway. A simultaneous assault on Inverness and Oban was likely to fail. Any latter-day ‘westerly’ scheme would have to stress local needs and

local endeavour, as the Highland Company and the Callander & Oban had done. Parliament might heed the plea that these established Companies were neglecting their duty to the western Highlands; but Parliament had to be persuaded that there was sufficient traffic for a newcomer, and an intrusive “contractors’ line” would always suggest piracy. The Caledonian Company or the North British had to be committed before any bill was lodged; it was not enough to gamble on cajoling or ensnaring them as the bill went forward. Moreover, if Inverness was not the target, neither the Caledonian nor the North British would readily embrace a Fort William line for its own sake. But there was every chance of engaging the Caledonian in a general scheme if that scheme protected Oban and gave the Caledonian new opportunities north-of-Clyde. And the North British was likely to respond to any project which offered some share of Oban traffic and reinforced North British control of Dunbartonshire and Loch Lomond.

Thomas Waldron-Smith, engineer of the Glasgow & North Western Railway, was attacked on several counts - underestimating costs, relying on a hasty and incomplete survey and paying no attention to amenity. These charges were exaggerated. But the very boldness of Waldron-Smith’s plans made for controversy. His line ran the entire length of Loch Lomond and carved uncompromising and all too visible terraces in Glen Falloch, in Glen Coe and along Loch Ness. He drew on Scandinavian and Swiss experience, and it is striking that the Commons Committee seemed unimpressed; there was facile but effective criticism of his proposed avalanche shelters in Glen Coe, as if such provision proved that the project was irresponsible. By contrast, Charles Forman’s West Highland Railway would be presented as tightly costed and engineered to the grain of the country. A deviation on upper Loch Lomond, making the line less obtrusive, was readily conceded. In avoiding Glen Coe the West Highland promoters would avoid the controversy which beset the Glasgow & North Western. Forman on the whole escaped the parliamentary scrutiny which Waldron-Smith experienced. The detour across Rannoch Moor would be questioned, but not on engineering grounds. Waldron-Smith was an outsider and the agent of outsiders, who did not themselves appear before the Commons Committee. Great proprietors, including the Duke of Montrose, the Marquess of Breadalbane and Lord Lovat, had not been won over. Forman was well-known. His preliminary report promised economy in construction and a modest but increasing traffic. He had the active support, or at least the forbearance, of every large landowner along the West Highland line to Fort William; and his estimates were endorsed by contractors who, though partisan, had their own interests to safeguard and stood apart from the promoters. These issues are discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

The Glasgow & North Western Railway would have developed Glasgow “residential” traffic to Balamaha and Rowardennan. The West Highland promoters counted on “residential” business north from Helensburgh, along the Gareloch and Loch Long. Between Tyndrum and Inverness, the Glasgow & North Western featured concentration points, where the traffic of scattered communities could be gathered - Ballachulish for Appin and Duror, Corran Ferry for Ardgour and Moidart, Gairloch for Spean Bridge... Until the Arisaig branch was added, herring from Loch Hourn would be carted to Invergarry. Cattle and sheep ‘walked’ from Skye and from the far North West would be intercepted at Fort Augustus. The West Highland promoters used a similar presentation, and some of the same material, adapted to their Rannoch-and-Spean route. All this recalled the old theme of ‘optimum route’, calculated to show that the West Highland Railway could live off the country without robbing the Highland Company or the Callander & Oban. The Glasgow & North Western promoters argued that exchange of traffic at Inverness and at Tyndrum, together with the general stimulus to railway business which the new line must bring, would benefit rather than damage the two established Companies. The West Highland promoters necessarily echoed this argument in respect of their proposed connection with the Callander & Oban line at Crianlarich. And they pledged to continue the West Highland route to the coast at Roshven - in effect the Arisaig feeder appended to the Glasgow & North Western.

Chapter 3 explores these parallels. Among the Fort William and Lochaber figures who brought the West Highland scheme to fruition, having first supported the Glasgow & North Western, were distiller, Donald P. MacDonald, solicitor, Nigel B. MacKenzie, and landowners, Lord Abinger and Cameron of Lochiel. There were others. Waldron-Smith consulted George Malcolm of Invergarry, an influential spokesman for the landed interest^[31]. Malcolm acted for Lord Burton, sporting tenant of Glen Quoich; the Midland Railway’s alleged enthusiasm for the Glasgow & North Western was in some measure Burton’s enthusiasm^[32]. In the 1860s MacDonald, Abinger and Lochiel had backed the proposed Newtonmore-to-Fort William line; the two proprietors had offered a year’s rental in a vain attempt to engage the Highland Railway^[33]. For the Glasgow & North Western promotion, MacDonald, who was also a tenant farmer, compiled elaborate tables of livestock^[34]. MacKenzie spoke for Lochiel, who was serving on the Napier Commission and could not attend the Commons Committee^[35]. Unlike other landowners, Abinger knew something of the promoters and appealed to City investors on their behalf^[36].

The promoters admitted that their project was speculative. But, as parliamentary counsel put it, “con-

tractors' lines" could be good or bad. They would bring a trunk railway through a neglected region and add a branch line to aid the crofting and fishing communities of the West.

(It) will prove of more advantage to ... an exceedingly suffering population ... than any amount either of emigration or eleemosynary relief could bestow, even were it provided by the country at large..^[37]

The established Companies were laggard and must be coaxed or coerced. Landowners hard hit by the Depression must be helped to help themselves. State intervention was not desirable. Private enterprise, in the form of a legitimate "contractors' line", would provide the necessary stimulus. Counsel reminded the Committee that even unscrupulous promotions ("sheer swindles and robberies") often turned out "an unmixed benefit to the district that they pass through, and to the (whole) country afterwards". The Glasgow & North Western was above board. The promoters were "gentlemen who venture to think that property invested in ... Scotch railways is ... more secure than investments in foreign bonds"^[38].

The Highland Company saw only an irresponsible, destabilising promotion.

Edwin Gerard, James Jarvis, Robert Read and James Wilkinson are (prospective) Directors of the (new) Company ... (Their) Preamble recites that these persons "with others, are willing, at their own expense, to construct the ... Railways" but ... no "others" can be shown to exist who are either willing or able ... to carry out the ... undertaking ... while the persons named are wholly unable to do so. James Jarvis and James Wilkinson are Contractors ... (Edwin) Gerard ... is (an) American Agent, and Robert Read is ... the Secretary of the Somerset & Dorset Railway.. . None of these gentlemen are (sic) owners of ... any lands or property on the line., nor have they any ... interests of any kind in Scotland^[39].

Other opponents kept up the attack.

The persons named in the Bill ... have no interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the district ... They seek to raise no less than £2,800,000 by shares and borrowing, while they estimate the cost of the Railway ... at £1,526,166 13 4, thus asking to be entrusted with power to raise no less than £1,273,000 for undefined purposes^[40].

In this climate, the Commons Committee perhaps paid more attention than usual to routine objections - that Waldron-Smith's estimates were insufficient or that the promoters had borrowed their parliamentary deposit. But landed opposition was telling. Not only the great Highland landlords but owners on the northern edge of Glasgow were adverse. Though some of the hostile petitions were tactical, with an eye both to compensation and to new feuing, the overall effect was to undermine the Glasgow & North

Western scheme. In 1888-9 the West Highland promoters would present their project as a 'bona fide landowners' line'^[41]. In 1882-3 the Glasgow & North Western promoters seem to have lacked the skill, or the time, to placate those landowners who might have been won over. George Malcolm was factor for the Ellice family at Invergarry; Lord Burton was their tenant. But the Ellice Trustees submitted that the line was premature and would damage their amenity. And Lord Abinger, who served on the Caledonian Canal Commission, was unable to prevent a petition from his fellow Commissioners, reminding Parliament that railway competition might make the Canal even more dependent on state subsidy.

The North British Railway, the Forth & Clyde Junction and the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle all lodged 'petitions against', whereby the North British Company sought to impose their own terms on the Glasgow & North Western. In 1888-9 the North British would behave very differently, first reaching an understanding with the West Highland promoters and then affecting to remain in the background when the West Highland Bill ran its parliamentary course. The Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Company asserted a prior right to build on to Crianlarich, but the Company's Crianlarich Bill was withdrawn, leaving the field to the Glasgow & North Western. All this suggests that the North British expected to secure access to Oban, by one means or another. As for the charge that the North British backed the Glasgow & North Western scheme in its entirety but chose to dissemble, the verdict must be 'not proven'. There is the Dougall-Walker correspondence. There is evidence of ongoing but unsuccessful negotiations while the Glasgow & North Western Bill was before Parliament. There is Samuel Mason, sometime General Manager of the North British Railway, who testified on behalf of the promoters and possessed, as might be expected, an intimate knowledge of the rivalry between the Caledonian Company and the North British. Mason was a plausible go-between. He was, on his own admission, something of a professional witness for would-be promoters^[42]. That the Secretary of the Somerset & Dorset Company was involved, however tenuously, with the Glasgow & North Western suggests, once again, that the Midland Railway had taken some part; for the Somerset & Dorset had Midland affiliations. This need not mean that the Midland Company and the North British were in collusion. However, the North British was not unwilling to play off the Midland against the Great Northern and the North Eastern, in respect of Anglo-Scottish traffic.

To combat the Glasgow & North Western, the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway crafted a defence which would be refined and repeated when other attacks had to be faced. The two

Companies had pioneered railway development in the Scottish Highlands, offering ‘optimum’ routes to open up the country. Parliament had recognised this, at least by implication, and had a duty to protect them from predators who hoped to draw off traffic which had been patiently built up: ‘optimum’ routes were, by definition, not the most direct routes, and Parliament had a particular duty to scrutinise cut-off promotions which gave a colour of public interest to speculative and spoiling ventures^[43].

The Duke of Sutherland testified that he had sunk £355,000 in the Far North lines and £100,000 in the Highland Railway proper. His personal liability was £160,000. He did not look for direct returns. The community at large and his own estates would benefit indirectly.

I am not a financier, or I should not have spent so much .. (I) should certainly not have made these large outlays had I not ... been convinced that no one ... would make a competing line, and had I not supposed that we should be protected from any speculation of that sort^[44].

T.C.Bruce M.P., deputy chairman of the Highland Railway, submitted that the Glasgow & North Western Railway would destroy his Company’s small margin of profit and ‘prevent us carrying out any further extension’. Parliament should not heed ‘London speculators’. The Highland Railway had been made by ‘men of credit and the gentry in the Highlands’, whose sacrifice should be applauded.

(They) not only constructed the lines, but ... not having, even with their contributions, money enough to complete them at first, in order to avoid financing ... undertook very large liabilities ... which advances have been repaid as the capital was issued ..; and the result ... is that ... these lines were constructed as cheaply as ... possible ..; the contractors were paid ... in cash, and there was no financing ..^[45].

The Callander & Oban Company, with solid assistance from the Caledonian and the London & North Western, could not make such an emphatic plea of sacrifice. But local endeavour was still the key note, as in Breadalbane’s submission.

Your Petitioner has taken an active interest in providing ... for those residing upon or in the neighbourhood of his estates by the encouragement of coasting steamers; by having steamers placed on the lakes ..; and especially by aiding in the formation of the Callander & Oban Railway (which) was commenced ... by 139 gentlemen interested in the district, and after much trouble and delay was ... opened in 1880. ... Your Petitioner not only accepted payment for almost all the land taken ... in shares but also subscribed largely for shares^[46].

The Liberal Government of 1880-5 appointed the Napier Commission ('Royal Commission of Inquiry into the conditions of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland') in March, 1883. The Napier Report was published on 28 April 1884^[47]. The Commissioners asserted that the Highlands needed "improved communication by post, telegraph, roads, steam vessels and railways". In the Highland context the military roads, the parliamentary roads and the Caledonian Canal were solid precedents for state assistance.

West coast fish curers lacked the facilities taken for granted on the east coast and were "entitled in common fairness to call on the Government to rectify this inequality". The telegraph network excluded parts of Sutherland, Barra, much of Lewis and outlying islands in Orkney and Shetland, despite earlier proposals that the system be completed with support from the Herring Brand Fund. The Post Office's rule that mail and telegraph extensions should pay for themselves was unjust.

(A) department ... which has studied the convenience of ... urban districts ... should now use its powers ... to anticipate the wants, and advance the ... welfare of those who suffer under the discouragements of distance and dispersion. The post-office monopoly would thus justify its prerogatives and its gains.

To the theme of equity was added the theme of national efficiency. War Office returns were quoted to demonstrate the continuing contribution of the Highlands and Islands to the Volunteers and to the Regular Army. Poor relief expenditure of the 1860s and 1870s was detailed, implying that these sums could be deployed to better purpose. Development of the west coast fishery would feed the great cities and lessen Britain's dependence on imports: any subsidy for steamers and railways to serve the fishery would soon pay for itself. ("The possible loss to the public exchequer would be small; the link between the toiler of the sea and the toiler of the town would be profitable to both.") The resources and latent enterprise of the Highlands would be enhanced by links with "the great centre of consumption and industry".

A direct mail service from Strome Ferry to Stornoway should replace the roundabout route via Skye and Lochmaddy. Pending the promotion of new railways, the mail steamers based on the existing railheads at Strome and Oban should be given sufficient support to operate daily. Leading lights in Loch Carron would make Strome a safe port of call all year round. The Dingwall & Skye Railway might be extended to Kyleakin (i.e. Kyle of Lochalsh), connecting with "a cheap narrow gauge line through Skye". Another narrow gauge line was needed in Lewis. There was a clear need for a third mainland railhead "at some

central point on the west of Inverness-shire". It was regrettable that Parliament had rejected the Glasgow & North Western Railway, which had promised a branch "from Fort William to the sea, near the head [mouth?] of Loch Nevis".

Subsidy for new construction all the way to the west coast from Dalwhinnie or Newtonmore on the Highland Railway or from Tyndrum or Connel Ferry on the Callander & Oban Railway was not to be expected. But state support for the thirty or forty miles between Fort William and the sea ought to be considered.

(Extension) from some point on the present lines ... would involve a branch of about eighty miles... If, however, the railway was brought to Fort William, the distance would be reduced by more than one half. The branch line, at all events in the first instance would not pay ... (Left) to the unaided efforts of the railway companies, it might be indefinitely postponed ... Under these circumstances ... Government, .. on behalf of a people crippled ... by the stubborn features of nature, and ... in the interests of an industry of national importance as a source of food .., might step in (with) subsidy to some existing company or to some company to be formed hereafter.

Thus, on the inducement of government assistance to continue to the west coast, the Highland Railway might revive Hope-Scott's scheme for a line by Laggan into Lochaber, or the Callander & Oban Railway might revive plans for a Fort William link, via Glen Coe or from Connel Ferry.

But the Commissioners had taken note of the Glasgow & North Western scheme. There was the possibility ("some company to be formed hereafter") of new construction north from Loch Lomond via Glen Coe to Fort William, with a subsidised extension to the sea. And they had the submission of A. G. Morrison of Bridge of Allan, solicitor and agent (at Stirling) for the Railway Clearing House.

To develop fully the fishing industry and give regular employment ... to the fishermen north of ... Ardnamurchan it is absolutely necessary to have a railway ... nearer than ... Oban or Strome Ferry. (If) the Proprietors ... would promote ... a line ... to Arisaig or Mallaig Bay ... subscribing to the extent of a year's rent paripassu, ... there is little doubt but what certain Scotch and English Railways would ... come forward to assist ..^[48]

From Fort William to Arisaig or Mallaig the line defined itself, and the best link from the South, cheapening construction and thereby allowing landowners to claim that they had funded a larger fraction of the cost, ran from Aberfoyle and across Rannoch Moor to Lochaber. Glen Coe should be avoided. Morrison had offered a similar plan to the Scottish Fishery Board in 1878.^[49] He had prepared a well-researched review of the main proprietors along the route and in the islands. They must, he insisted, take the lead, by giving land and subscribing to the limit of their ability, which would satisfy Parliament that theirs was "a

patriotic as well as an interested view'^[50].

Ireland, where conditions invited comparison with the western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, had a modest 1,500 route miles of railway (5' 3" gauge) by the 1860s^[51]. But Ireland was different. No duty was levied on passenger fares. Regional monopoly and amalgamation, long controversial in mainland Britain, were accepted and even encouraged. The Public Works Commissioners had advanced more than £2,300,000 in loans. Some £1,200,000 had been repayed; but to do so the Irish Companies had borrowed elsewhere. There was no escape from indebtedness without further assistance from the state.

(The) Irish railways have been constructed, to a great extent, by means of loans ... The Government, .. having lent the money ... and having been repaid large sums, the repayment of which ... compelled the companies to borrow..., it was not ... unreasonable to allow them, as a temporary loan, a portion of the money they had (repaid).^[52]

These "temporary loans" soon reached £1,500,000, at 4% or 5%, for between thirteen and twenty years.

The Devonshire Commission (1864-5) addressed the possibility of state purchase. In Ireland this was feasible. The notional capital value of the main Irish Companies was a small fraction of the overall capital value of railways in the United Kingdom. And Irish opinion held that purchase was the logical conclusion of a policy which had been "paternal" from the outset. The Commission's majority findings rejected purchase but recommended amalgamations, with Treasury support on condition that the economies of amalgamation were seriously pursued. The campaign for outright state ownership continued. The thirty nine owning Companies of 1865 were subsequently reduced to nineteen; but in 1885 there were still twenty working Companies for a network now grown to 2,600 route miles (excluding light lines). By comparison, late Victorian Scotland had five main Companies, and the combined mileage of the two largest (North British Railway and Caledonian Railway) approached the Irish total. Irish M.P.s argued that public credit must be brought wholeheartedly into play. With Treasury Guarantees, the Companies could contain their chronic debts, reduce their charges, reform their management and offer the ordinary shareholders some prospect of dividends. Existing shareholders would have an assured 3% and their shares would trade readily. Native enterprise would be set free. Traffic and revenue would increase. Ireland would gladly bear the taxes which serviced the Guarantees.

(We) simply asked the rich and flourishing country to give the aid of their credit to the poor and backward country, to do nothing more ... than to extend the same assistance to Ireland as to Canada.^[53]

Ireland's West and South West were badly served. Their fishery lacked railheads or relied on routes where two or three quarrelsome Companies gave scant attention to through traffic. Tramways Acts, which secured an additional 600 route miles in the 1880s and 1890s, were a partial remedy. This was largely narrow gauge. The burden of guaranteeing an aggregate capital of more than £1,000,000 fell on the Irish local authorities. There was Treasury support, usually a 2% Guarantee; but this became available only when an approved line opened for traffic. The baronies and counties had to pledge up to 5% during the period of construction. Proprietors, including absentee proprietors, chose the schemes; the increased cess was carried by their tenants.

The Report of the Commission on Irish Public Works (Allport Report) in 1888 identified several weaknesses in the established methods of promoting secondary lines and tramways. When schemes failed on technical detail, the only remedy was a specific Act of Parliament. Central government scrutiny prevented local authorities from assuming impossible burdens but also frustrated worthwhile projects. Local authorities were bound to complete and operate lines on which the promoters had defaulted. Guaranteed capital was often exhausted before traffic could begin. Those who took up guaranteed shares had no real stake in the districts to be served - indeed it was sometimes to their advantage that trains did not run at all. Where the Public Works Commissioners gave a loan, they might eventually foreclose; thereafter they had to cajole an established Company to step in. On one occasion the Commissioners auctioned the whole property and, with no takers, wrote it off as a bad debt, while the county seized the track and plant in lieu of cess.

The Report recommended that Treasury assistance be direct and take immediate effect. Treasury Guarantees at 3% might cover both construction costs and operating costs. Local contributions might be flexible, up to the equivalent of a 6d rate, subsidising working expenses or diluting the Treasury's obligation. Existing Companies should identify the contributory traffic generated by lines which enjoyed subsidy. If the receipts allowed, 50% of any surplus income should become a sinking fund from which both the Treasury and the local authorities could be recompensed.

Under the ensuing Light Railways (Ireland) Acts of 1889 and 1893, the Lord-Lieutenant was em-

powered to approve lines which he considered likely to aid the fishery or other enterprise. Such lines would be given either a Treasury Guarantee or a free grant. The Conservative Government of 1886-92 admitted that this was a "new departure", justified "really and solely in the poverty of the districts with which we have to deal"^[54]. The Railway (Ireland) Act, 1890 offered the larger Irish Companies free grants to develop light railways. The Transfer of Railways (Ireland) Act, 1890, authorised them to issue shares and debentures guaranteed by the baronies, to expedite the construction of light lines. The Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1895, allowed the Treasury to redeem baronial guarantees of earlier date. A cumbersome restriction remained, in that the board of Works was bound to assess each and every scheme, which made for competing and blocking promotions. These guidelines and provisions were consolidated and, where necessary, improved in the definitive Railways (Ireland) Act of 1896. Treasury assistance became available to any Company undertaking a scheme approved by the Lord-Lieutenant, and this might include assistance for connecting coach and steamer services. Proprietors and local bodies were required to give land and general support. Baronial guarantees might be added. Up to £50,000, or half the cost of construction, could be advanced in each case. The Treasury had discretion to make a larger contribution in the congested districts. Treasury grants under the 1896 Act came to almost £2,000,000. 3% Treasury Guarantees amounted to £4,000 annually, with the baronies covering £250,000. The Irish network gained 300 route miles, about 100 miles being narrow gauge.

In the 1880s and 1890s it was regularly claimed that the Scottish Highlands and Islands were owed the same consideration as Ireland, not least in the matter of encouraging further railway development. Those who denied that there were identical 'land' problems nevertheless inclined to agree that Scotland's crofter-fishermen had been more patient and long-suffering than the Irish tenantry and deserved at least equal attention^[55]. Meanwhile the Napier Report was selectively turned into policy via the Crofters Commission and other innovations^[56]. But a new railhead on the west coast was lacking. A railway to Fort William might not be a paying proposition, but there was the possibility that an extension to the coast, bringing contributory traffic, would be funded in part by the state. On the other hand, there might be a better case for new lines in the remote North West, cross-country branches from the Highland Railway's Dingwall & Skye route or from the same Company's Far North route. These lines might be longer than the Fort William-to-Arisaig line tentatively identified in the Report, and they might need a larger subsidy; but they did not have to await the prior promotion, by private enterprise, of a connecting line to the South.

The Napier Commissioners did not enlarge on options north of Strome Ferry or south of Oban, but they helped to stimulate the promotion of ‘west coast railways’ presented to Parliament as adjuncts of government strategy. The Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway (1886-7) did not bid for subsidy, but the promoters claimed that it would be cheap and lightly constructed, opening up Argyll more thoroughly than the Callander & Oban route and serving the fishermen of Loch Fyne and the southern Hebrides. The supporters of the West Highland line to Fort William and Roshven (1888-9) likewise promised cheap but sturdy construction, following the lie of the land. In the first version of this scheme, subsidy was sought for the thirty miles from Fort William to the sea; and, without subsidy, the fate of Fort William - Roshven line, postponed in 1889, was uncertain. Considered as a ‘Napier’ promotion, the West Highland Railway had a rival in the Garve & Ullapool Railway (1889-90), an off-shoot of the Dingwall & Skye line.

Chapter 3 explores these projects, giving pride of place to the West Highland Railway. But the latter day promotions in the western Highlands cannot be understood without additional discussion of Scottish and Anglo-Scottish rail traffic in the twenty years after the key amalgamations of the 1860s.

Consolidation of the Highland Railway (1865) has already been noted, together with the absorption of the Edinburgh, Perth & Dundee Railway into the North British (1862). Take-over of the Edinburgh & Glasgow Company by the Caledonian was all but achieved in 1854 and pursued intermittently thereafter. This promised Caledonian domination of the Central Belt, with the North British confined to the Borders, Lothian and Fife. In 1865 the North British faced down Caledonian opposition and amalgamated with the Edinburgh & Glasgow. Now established in Lanarkshire and Dunbartonshire, the North British became the largest Scottish Company. But this victory was offset when, that same year, the Caledonian absorbed the Scottish Central Railway, securing the trunk route by Stirling and Perth to the North. Caledonian and North British would remain embattled - unless, as was briefly in prospect in 1871, the two Companies became one^[57].

There were, of necessity, safeguards for Caledonian traffic north from Edinburgh, which ran on North British (previously Edinburgh & Glasgow) track to Larbert. There were likewise safeguards for North British through traffic over the Caledonian (previously Scottish Central) via Stirling and Perth, pending completion of the ‘Bridges Route’. The Forth Bridge and the Tay Bidge, with various additions and cut-

offs would give the North British an independent main line to the North. East Coast Anglo-Scottish traffic also ran via Stirling, as did Midland Anglo-Scottish traffic after 1876, when the Midland Railway reached Carlisle^[58]. North of Perth, the Highland Railway welcomed business from all-comers, but was obliged to favour the Caledonian and the London & North Western. (Above) The Callander & Oban route was similarly thirled to the West Coast partners; the Caledonian was in control and the London & North Western contributed £50,000 of capital^[59]. The reciprocal provisions of 1865 extended to Callander; for the Dunblane and Callander branch was originally Scottish Central. The Caledonian took East Coast and Midland traffic to and from Oban but discriminated against North British traffic west of Callander. In 1866 the Caledonian took over the Scottish North Eastern Railway, recalling how the original Caledonian scheme and allied promotions in the 1840s had aimed at a unified trunk line from Carlisle to Aberdeen. North British interests and the interests of the East Coast and Midland partnerships were protected. The Caledonian and North British became joint owners of the Dundee & Arbroath Railway; the North British continued independently to Montrose (Kinnaber), with running powers over the Caledonian (previously Scottish North Eastern) on to Aberdeen^[60].

Though the conflict between Caledonian and North British turned into an enduring truce after 1891, as subsequent Chapters show, mutual suspicion died hard. At the turn of the century, the Manchester, Newcastle & Glasgow promotion (Above) revived North British fears that the Caledonian would invade the Borders. And the Caledonian had tried unsuccessfully to invade North British Fife, besides penetrating North British Dunbartonshire. The North British threatened the Caledonian by seeking a new route between Glasgow and Carlisle. Amalgamation of the Glasgow & South Western and the North British would secure the desired route, and Caledonian probing into Ayrshire was not unlikely to drive the Glasgow & South Western towards the North British. But the Caledonian argued for joint control, along with the North British; after hard fought parliamentary contests, the Glasgow & South Western remained its own master.

The Caledonian contemplated a supplementary line from Carstairs to Falkirk, reducing the need for running powers over the North British. The Stirling & Western District promotion offered the North British a new entry to Stirling, independent of the Caledonian. The proposed line from Dundee to Stanley would have given the Highland Railway a new outlet via the North British Bridges Route, while bringing the North British into Caledonian Strathmore. Rivalry and competition was taken for granted by all

would-be promoters - the Kirkcaldy folk who wanted the Caledonian to break North British control of Fife, the Ayr traders who set Caledonian against Glasgow & South Western, the Dundonians who sought to redirect the Highland Company's traffic. Had Caledonian and North British come together, surely wasteful manoeuvring and duplication would have been reduced? The three lesser Companies, Highland, Glasgow & South Western and Great North of Scotland, each left to a safe regional monopoly, might have been gathered in one by one, to an all-Scotland Company, truly the Caledonian (or truly the North British). Instead they were caught between, but also able to play off, the two larger Companies. And the Great North of Scotland, sustained in part by competition at Aberdeen, Caledonian and North British, West Coast and East Coast, tried to expand at the Highland Railway's expense, when amalgamation with the Inverness Company was the more reasonable course.

Competition for Anglo-Scottish traffic was an important factor. After 1866 the English Companies routinely demanded that all promotions calculated to upset the strategic balance in Scotland be qualified with special clauses and schedules preserving the arrangements built in to the 1860s amalgamations^[61]. The North British Railway bore the cost of the first Tay Bridge and its replacement. The Great Northern Railway, the North Eastern and the Midland all contributed to the cost of the Forth Bridge, with the North British as operator and part owner^[62]. Amalgamation of the Midland Company and the Glasgow & South Western, which continued the Midland route to the Clyde, was a real possibility, with implications both for the Caledonian and for the North British. That the North British handled both East Coast and Midland traffic was another complication. If the North British amalgamated with the Glasgow & South Western and thereafter aligned more closely with the Midland, in the last resort the East Coast would send their traffic over the North Eastern Company's Newcastle - Carlisle line and offer it to the Caledonian. Hopes of attracting North Eastern and Caledonian support for a new 'direct' Newcastle - Glasgow route were not entirely groundless.^[63]

But the Bridges Route was a major commitment. It bound the North British system together and offered advantages to East Coast and Midland alike, besides benefitting the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland and in some sense prolonging their independence. Neither the North British nor any of the English Companies was likely to give wholehearted support to an alternative route to the North, such as the Glasgow & North Western promoters offered in 1882-3.

Chapter 2 Appendix

Napier Commission, 1883 - 4 Secretary, <u>Malcolm MacNeill</u>	Son of the laird of Colonsay and a relative of Lady Gordon-Cathcart of South Uist and Barra, with experience in Poor Law administration.
Lord Napier and Ettrick Chairman	Sometime Governor of Madras, President of the Social Science Association.
Sir Kenneth MacKenzie of Gairloch	Improving landlord, trained in agricultural chemistry, Lord-Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty, Liberal candidate for Inverness-shire (against the Conservative, Lochiel).
Donald Cameron of Lochiel	Diplomatic service, MP for Inverness-shire, mediator in the Crofters' War.
Charles Fraser-MacKintosh	Celtic antiquarian, sometime factor for The MacKintosh, MP for Inverness Burghs and subsequently for Inverness-shire, a wavering Crofter-Liberal.
Alexander Nicholson	Sheriff-substitute of Kirkcudbright, mountaineer, Gaelic scholar, member of the Argyll Commission on Education.
Donald MacKinnon	Professor of Celtic, University of Edinburgh

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 2

- ¹ SRO/RHP 15965/1-26
C.J.A. Robertson, “Railway Mania in the Highlands: The Marquess of Breadalbane and the Scottish Grand Junction Railway”
- ² SRO/BR/PROS(S)/15
Statement in support of the proposed Perth & Inverness Railway, 1852-3
- ³ SRO/BR/PROS(S)/1/22
Proposed Morayshire & Perthshire Direct Junction Railway, 1860
- ⁴ SRO/BR/PROS(S)/1/15
The promoters of the Perth & Inverness Railway anticipated a Badenoch-to-Fort William branch
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Lord Abinger, Evidence Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Cameron of Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
Both landowners consistently asserted that the Highland Railway had discouraged Hope-Scott’s promotion
See also Joseph Mitchell, Reminiscences, Volume 2, page 210
- ⁵ Joseph Mitchell, Reminiscences, Volume 2, pages 210-1
- ⁶ SRO/BR/PROS(S)/1/3
Prospectus of the Callander & Oban Railway, 1864
- ⁷ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/394
Lord Malcolm of Poltalloch, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 26 March 1897
Malcolm recalled his father’s part in the Ardrishaig & Loch Awe Railway
See also J Thomas The Callander & Oban Railway, page 33
WHM
Sketch Map of MacLean’s Connel Ferry - Fort William line
Glasgow Herald 7 December 1894
Historical note on proposed railways between Oban and Fort William
- ⁸ SRO/RHP 46426/3, with Edinburgh Gazette Notice, 21 November 1873
Fort-William, Ballachulish & Tyndrum Railway
- ⁹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1888-9, Petition Against by the Highland Railway
- ¹⁰ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/62
Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Junction Railway, 1883-4
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/328
Great North of Scotland Railway (New Lines) Bill, 1883-4
SRO/RHP 25442
Great North of Scotland Railway Boat of Garten-Inverness cut-off and Highland Railway Aviemore-Inverness cut-off, 1883-4
N. T. Sinclair, “The Aviemore Line; Railway Politics in the Highlands 1882-98”
- ¹¹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Speech by counsel, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 30 April 1883
Thomas Waldron-Smith, Engineer of the Glasgow & North Western Railway, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 8 May 1883

- 12 SRO/BR/HR/1/4
Highland Railway Minutes, 3 July, 4 September, 2 October and 4 December 1883, and 2 January and 1 April 1884
SRO/BR/HR/1/6
Highland Railway Minutes, 7 September 1887, 2 and 29 October and 3 December 1889, and 3 September 1890
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/326
Highland Railway (New Lines) Bill, 1883-4
- 13 SRO/BR/HR/1/4
Highland Railway Minutes, 3 July, 7 August and 2 October 1883 and 2 January 1884
- 14 SRO/BR/HR/1/4
Highland Railway Minutes, 4 September, 2 October and 4 December 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/326
Highland Railway (Northern Lines Amalgamation) Bill, 1883-4
- 15 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Andrew Dougall, Secretary and General Manager of the Highland Railway, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 29 May 1883
- 16 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
This summary of the Callander & Oban Company's traffic is based on testimony adduced by the promoters of the Glasgow & North Western Railway, 1882-3.
J.F. Sim, land agent, Oban, Evidence; F.W. Cooper, timber merchant, Oban, Evidence, Commons, 7 May 1883; and S.L. Mason, former General Manager of the North British Railway, Evidence, 24 May 1883
That the Caledonian Company and the Callander & Oban Company were especially concerned to safeguard their Glasgow-Oban traffic appears clearly in the parliamentary contest over the West Highland Railway in 1889. See Chapter 3
- 17 J Thomas, The Callander & Oban Railway, pages 25-6
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/394
Charles Forman, Engineer of the West Highland Railway, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 2 April 1897
Forman recalled that he had laid out a Glasgow-Loch Lomond-Oban line while the Callander & Oban Railway was "stopped at Killin" (i.e. Glenoglehead).
- 18 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
James Forman, senior partner, Formans & McCall, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889
- 19 SRO/BR/NBR/1/30
North British Railway Minutes, 1 November 1883
Proposed Gareloch & Loch Long District Railway
SRO/BR/NBR/1/32
North British Railway Minutes, 3 July 1884
Proposed Helensburgh & Tarbet Railway
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
James Morrison, Chairman of the Shandon Hydropathic Company, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
- 20 SRO/RHP 15052/1
Aberfoyle-Crianlarich Extension, 1882-3
SRO/BR/NBR/1/30
North British Railway Minutes, 5 October 1882
Charles Forman's offer to promote an Aberfoyle-to-Tyndrum line on condition that the North British Company contributed £500 to preliminary expenses
North British Railway Minutes, 2 March 1883
Further discussions mooted.
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway

- 21 SRO/RHP 46427/1-3 and SRO/BR/MPS(S)/2/50
- 22 G. Dow, The Story of the West Highland, page 7
C. Hamilton-Ellis, The North British Railway, pages 146-7
J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, page 31
Ensuing discussion of the Glasgow & North Western Railway is based on SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Thomas, op. cit. page 91, deals briefly with a 'Direct Inverness & Glasgow' promotion in 1881-2
- 23 SRO/BR/NBR/1/30
North British Railway Minutes, 2 March 1883
- 24 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to John Walker, General Manager of the North British Railway, 3 January 1883
- 25 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Walker to Dougall, 5 January 1883
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 SRO/BR/HR/1/4
Highland Railway Minutes, 6 February 1883
- 28 SRO/BR/NBR/1/30
North British Railway Minutes (Traffic Committee), 23 June 1883
- 29 C Hamilton-Ellis The North British Railway, pages 123-5
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/174
Correspondence re running powers for the Glasgow & North Western Company over the Glasgow City & District Railway and draft agreement, February-March 1883
See also J. Thomas The North British Railway, Volume 2, pages 140-3
- 30 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Speech by counsel, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 June 1883
- 31 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Waldron-Smith, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 8 May 1883
- 32 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Sir Alfred Bass M.P. (subsequently Lord Burton) Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 2 May 1883
WHM
Burton, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 33 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons 3 May 1883
WHM
Lochiel, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 34 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
D. P. MacDonald, Evidence and Tables, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
- 35 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
N. B. MacKenzie, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 7 May 1883
- 36 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
- 37 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Speech by counsel, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 30 April 1883
- 38 Ibid.

- 39 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by the Highland Railway
- 40 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by David MacBrayne
- 41 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 21 March 1889
See also discussion in Chapter 3
- 42 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Mason, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 24 May 1883
In the course of Mason's lengthy evidence and cross-examination the promoters' strategy and their dealings with the North British Company were largely, though not entirely, revealed.
See also Petition Against by the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway, endorsed by the Duke of Montrose; Petition Against by the North British Railway; and speech by counsel, 24 May 1883, indicating that the hoped-for agreement with the North British had not been concluded.
- 43 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petitions Against by the Highland Railway and by the Callander & Oban Railway
- 44 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Duke of Sutherland, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 24 May 1883
- 45 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
T.C. Bruce, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 25 May 1883
- 46 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by the Marquess of Breadalbane
- 47 For ensuing discussion of the Napier Report, including direct quotations,
see PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS c.3980 1884
(Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.)
- 48 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Copy of A.G. Morrison's Notes on the Management of West Highland Estates, sent to John Conacher General Manager of the North British Railway, in March 1893.
This replicated, or paraphrased, Morrison's suggestions to the Napier Commission in 1883-4 and to Donald Boyd of Fort William in 1887-8. See also Chapter 3. Sheriff Nicholson Napier Commission, to Morrison, 9 October 1883, acknowledging Morrison's "memo and map" and confirming that Lord Napier already knew of the proposed route.
- 49 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Scottish Fishery Board to Morrison 10 January 1878, acknowledging "the line of railway you have laid down on one of Murray's Maps"
- 50 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Morrison's Notes on the Management of West Highland Estates
- 51 The ensuing discussion is largely based on J.C. Conroy, A History of Railways in Ireland.
- 52 Speech by H. Childers M.P., March 1867, quoted in Conroy, op cit. pages 44-5
- 53 Speech by C.B. Gregory M.P., July 1871, quoted in Conroy, op. cit. page 63
- 54 Speech by A.J. Balfour, Secretary of State for Ireland, 3 June 1889, quoted in Conroy, op. cit. page 275

- 55 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Alexander MacDonald factor and bank agent, Portree, to George Wieland, Secretary of the North British Railway, 4 May 1891, enclosing a copy of MacDonald's evidence to the Lothian Commission in May 1890. cf MacDonald's dealings with the Napier Commissioners, when he roundly condemned Irish influence in the Islands. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS c. 3980 1884.
See also I.M.M. MacPhail, the Crofters' War, pages 15, 22, 38, 46, 157, 172, 213, 221
- 56 J. Hunter, The Making of the Crofting Community cf. A.E. Cameron, Land for the People? Government and the Scottish Highlands, 1880-1925
- 57 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/265
Caledonian Railway and North British Railway Amalgamation Bill, 1871-2
J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 1, pages 158-62
- 58 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/212
Caledonian Railway and Scottish Central Railway Amalgamation Bill, 1864-5; North British Railway and Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway Amalgamation Bill, 1864-5
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Mason, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 24 May 1883
For other amalgamation permutations amongst the Caledonian, Edinburgh & Glasgow, North British and Scottish Central Companies, see SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/196, 198 and 207
- 59 J. Thomas, The Callander & Oban Railway, page 68
The Marquess of Breadalbane represented the London & North Western Company on the Callander & Oban board.
- 60 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/242
Caledonian Railway and Scottish North Eastern Railway Amalgamation Bill, 1865-6
J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, page 22 and Appendix
- 61 For example:-
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by Great Northern Railway and North Eastern Railway
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/326
Highland Railway (New Lines) Bill, 1883-4, Petitions Against by Midland Railway and by Great Northern Railway and North Eastern Railway
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9, Petitions Against by Great Northern Railway and North Eastern Railway (demanding protective clauses "as stringent as those contained in the North British Amalgamation Act, 1865")
- 62 J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, pages 18 and 25-31
See also C. Hamilton Ellis, The North British Railway, page 126

Chapter 3

The West Highland Railway, 1887-95

Chapter 3

This Chapter examines the promotion of the West Highland Railway. The narrative covers approximately two years, from the final months of 1887 to the start of construction in 1889. It examines how a **second** West Highland scheme overtook or absorbed the first during 1888 and reviews the progress of the West Highland Bill through Parliament between March and August, 1889. It sets out to show that this was a more complex, composite scheme than popular accounts by Dow, Thomas and others have allowed. Carrying the new route to the west coast was **not** the dominant consideration, no matter how important this later became. The question of government subsidy remains muted, while much of the discussion is concerned with the southern end of the route. It examines the motives and methods of those who supported the West Highland Railway and provides a basis for subsequent discussion of how far their expectations were fulfilled.

In October, 1887 Fort William began a fresh campaign to obtain a railway. According to Donald Boyd, president of the Merchants' Association, a debate was launched by Nigel B. MacKenzie, now Provost of the burgh, whose arguments in favour of a line south via Glen Coe "seemed to focus public opinion".^[1] Coincidentally the final weeks of 1887 saw a petition circulate among the landed proprietors of Lochaber, requesting that the Callander & Oban Railway (in effect, the Caledonian Company) revive the idea of a coastal line from Connel Ferry to Fort William. The landlords wanted rail access on any terms. Cameron of Lochiel later testified that he would just as readily have accepted the revival of the Hope-Scott scheme, had the Highland Railway shown any enthusiasm.^[2] But Fort William disliked the coastal line. It would feed more trade to Oban, which had been developing at Fort William's expense since the Callander & Oban route was completed; and it made for a very circuitous journey between Fort William and Glasgow, via Connel Ferry, Callander and Stirling. At the very least, Fort William wanted a direct connection with the Callander & Oban line - at Tyndrum, via Glen Coe, as the narrow gauge scheme of the 1870s had offered. A direct line on to Glasgow, independent of the Callander & Oban and the Caledonian, would be better still - as the Glasgow & North Western Railway had fleetingly promised and the North British might yet provide.^[3]

This suggests the emergence of two factions; they might be labelled as the Lochaber 'country party', looking to the Caledonian Railway to support a branch from Connel Ferry and the Fort William 'town party', ready to approach the North British for something more ambitious. But a 'two parties' model is at

best approximate. All were aware that they could play off the rivalry of Caledonian and North British. The mere suggestion of North British interest might hasten a Caledonian pledge to underwrite a Callander & Oban branch to Fort William, whether from Connel Ferry or from Tyndrum. Several important figures straddled 'country' and 'town'. Like other factors and land agents, MacKenzie had tried sheep farming on his own account. He also sought to encourage new feuing and residential development on the Lochaber estates, to the mutual advantage of landlords and the merchants and tradesmen of Fort William.^[4] MacDonald, whose two distilleries made him Fort William's principal employer, helped to organise the petition to the Callander & Oban Company. His traffic needed no particular route. Like the landowners, he wanted a railway, and he did not have to fear loss of business to Oban. As a sheep farmer, renting two substantial holdings on Lord Abinger's Inverlochy estate, MacDonald was as much 'country' as 'town'. He also leased one of his distilleries from Abinger.^[5]

By December the 'town party' was sufficiently confident to approach the North British Railway, seeking a statement which could be read at a public meeting. Ewen Cameron, agent for the National Bank, exchanged several letters and telegrams with John Walker, General Manager of the North British company, and George Wieland, the Company's Secretary.^[6] The Caledonian Railway, said Cameron, wanted to commit the Lochaber landowners and other influential people to a Connel Ferry - Fort William line. (In fact the Caledonian Company had made no such move.) Fort William greatly desired a railway via Glen Coe, the natural extension of any line to Crianlarich, and such a railway could be continued to the west coast at Arisaig.^[7] If the North British did not move, Lochaber and Fort William would close reluctantly with the inferior Caledonian scheme.^[8] Walker and Wieland explained that they could make no commitment in default of plans and traffic estimates; no bill could go forward until parliamentary session 1888-9.^[9]

The public meeting took place on 23rd December, with Boyd in the chair. Much was made of the advantages of a 100-mile route to Glasgow by Glen Coe and Loch Lomond as against 170 miles by Connel and Callander. A deputation was appointed to contact the North British Company, and the Burgh Commissioners were requested to send a deputation on their own account.^[10] D. P. MacDonald later recalled that those who attended the meeting wanted above all to "keep clear of Oban".^[11] That Oban had gained disproportionally from rail and steamer services and now sought to relegate Fort William to branch line status was the general refrain of those who supported MacKenzie's "proposed Glasgow &

Fort William railway'. The 'country' petition had not been pressed as briskly as the 'town party' feared. Lochiel and others had signed it, but took no further responsibility. Lochiel would later explain that he had signed as a matter of duty with no great hope of success.^[12] On 28 December MacDonald sent the completed petition to John Anderson, Secretary (and de facto manager) of the Callander & Oban Company. Besides Lochiel and MacDonald, the signatories were Mrs. Ellice of Invergarry, Lord Burton, George Malcolm, Lord Abinger, G.J. MacKay of Glen Gloy and Sheriff-substitute James Simpson. MacDonald warned Anderson that the Fort William Commissioners had refused to sign, having been persuaded to appeal to the North British, and that others would change sides if the North British took up the direct route.^[13] Anderson replied that the Glen Coe route offered no intermediate traffic whatever, whereas the coastal line would tap Benderloch and Appin. He forwarded the petition to the Secretary of the Caledonian Railway and wrote to Joseph Bolton, who chaired both the Caledonian and the Callander & Oban.^[14] Malcolm, unknown to MacDonald, took it upon himself to send another copy of the petition to James Thompson, General Manager of the Caledonian.^[15] While Cameron warned Wieland that Fort William would turn to the Caledonian, MacDonald hinted that the Caledonian faced North British intervention.^[16]

At the turn of the year, Boyd received two letters echoing earlier projects. Wilkinson & Jarvis, promoters of the Glasgow & North Western Railway, offered their plans and surveys of 1882-3. MacKenzie's line was essentially their line, and they welcomed its revival.^[17] A.G. Morrison, who had submitted his Rannoch Moor route to the Napier Commission in 1883, advised the Fort William interest to make common cause with the landed proprietors. Only thus would they engage the North British and attract government support. ("I know ... that, if the Proprietors would get it on foot, .. substantial assistance would be offered.") The pledges of landowners and sporting tenants must make a significant contribution to the total capital, and to achieve this desirable impression the cost of construction must be limited. The Rannoch route, though less 'direct' than Glen Coe, would be cheaper to build, and it could just as readily be continued to the Atlantic coast.^[18] On 4th January, 1888 Cameron submitted sketch plans and traffic projections to Wieland. The material was headed "Proposed West Highland Railway". Glen Coe was still the preferred route. South of Crianlarich the line might run as the North British Company pleased - by Loch Lomond or by Aberfoyle. A copy was sent to the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Marquess of Lothian, seeking assistance for the 'West Highland Railway' as the essential stem of the new route to the sea envisaged in the Napier Report.^[19] Early in February Boyd and Cameron met Walker and Wieland in Edinburgh. Walker undertook to prevent any attempt by the Caledonian Railway to block the direct line

with a Callander & Oban branch down Glen Falloch. The North British directors, he said, would endorse the 'West Highland', provided the Government contributed £300,000.^[20]

The would-be promoters continued to set Caledonian against North British. On 18 February Cameron warned Wieland of rumours that the Caledonian Company was "moving", in which case support would shift to the Connel Ferry line. Four days later Malcolm wrote to Thompson that "circumstances ... recently arisen" called for a speedy decision on the part of the Caledonian, whereupon Thompson assured both Malcolm and MacDonald that the 'country' petition would soon be considered.^[21] Since Cameron included a copy of Thompson's letter when he wrote once more to Wieland at the beginning of March, having earlier reconstructed the 'country' petition for Walker's information, there could be no doubt that 'town' and 'country' were colluding.^[22] And Boyd had already relayed the substance of the Edinburgh meeting to Lochiel.^[23] On 7 March the Caledonian board discussed the Connel Ferry - Fort William scheme. To what extent would landowners subscribe? Would they give land? Malcolm delayed his reply until the middle of May. Lochiel, said Malcolm, was ready to chair a meeting of landowners and sporting tenants later in the summer, by which time a campaign for government assistance would have gathered pace.^[24] He did not say that the supporters of the 'West Highland' route by Glen Coe were bidding for state aid, in the hope of thereby firmly attaching the North British. In effect Malcolm reminded the Caledonian - if reminder was needed, that any railway to Fort William might attract subsidy if the line was continued to the west coast. In a further appeal to Walker at the end of May, Boyd claimed Malcolm as an ally and pressed the North British to accommodate the landed interest.

We are all anxiously waiting to hear from you... Lochiel, all the Proprietors, and the rest in this wide district mean to hold an extraordinary meeting on... the proposed Railway here in August when the sportsmen are in the Country, but before arranging for it, it is quite indispensable that we should have an interview with you. Mr. Malcolm of Invergarry will accompany us...^[25]

But without a clear promise from the Government that an extension from Fort William to the sea would be subsidised both the coastal scheme and the Glen Coe scheme were set to languish, as earlier projects had done.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the West Highland Railway presented to Parliament in 1888-9 was not the 'West Highland' conceived by the Fort William 'town party' in the early months of

1888, and the explanation is to be found in the disputed territory between the Clyde and the Callander & Oban Railway, running east-west through Crianlarich, Tyndrum and Dalmally.

The Caledonian Company sought to share the industrial and passenger traffic along the north bank of the lower Clyde and in the Vale of Leven, where the great amalgamations of the 1860s had given the North British Railway almost complete control. The North British sought a cut-off from Glasgow to Oban; for Glasgow business made up the larger part of the Callander & Oban Company's regular income, and much of it could be diverted to the shorter route which Oban had always wanted. In defending Oban, the Caledonian might create a bridgehead north-of-Clyde: in securing Dunbartonshire, the North British might gain access to Oban. These calculations have been considered in Chapter 2, which also showed how a North British client, the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Company, planned to extend to Crianlarich but made way for the Glasgow & North Western promoters, who offered the North British a 'direct' route from the Clyde to Tyndrum.

The 1880s also saw proposals to continue the Helensburgh Railway by Garelochhead to Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long, or, via Loch Long, to Tarbet and Ardlui on upper Loch Lomond, whence the gap to Crianlarich was less than twenty miles.^[26] It could be filled, too, without the expensive engineering on the Aberfoyle - Crianlarich line, carried high above Inversnaid, or the controversy aroused when the Glasgow & North Western was surveyed along the entire length of Loch Lomond. Expectation of additional "residential" traffic and strategic imperative were likely to secure, sooner or later, North British support for extension north from Helensburgh. But this still hung fire when, in 1886, the Glasgow - Helensburgh line became the anchor for a promotion aiming at Loch Fyne and Kintyre.

A large area of Argyll south of the Callander & Oban route remained without a railway. In this area, as in Lochaber, the long-delayed completion of the line to Oban revived talk of feeder railways, scouted twenty years earlier. The journey from, say, Inverary to Glasgow, via Dalmally and Callander, would have been even more roundabout than the Fort William - Connel Ferry - Callander route. The Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway, which won its Act in 1887, offered a 'direct' route independent of the Callander & Oban, and the promoters looked to the North British.^[27] The Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan thus invites at least rough and ready comparison with the 'West Highland' scheme as first conceived. The proposed line, from Hunter's Quay to the Crinan Canal, had severe limitations, needing ferry connections not just on

the Clyde but across Loch Fyne. However the North British Railway agreed both to work the line and to guarantee the capital, on a basis of rebates for contributory traffic. This tied the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan to the North British at Craigendoran, without altogether excluding the Caledonian Railway (Gourock) or the Glasgow & South Western Railway (Greenock). And Parliament accepted that the North British should be allowed the opportunity to develop Crinan, balancing what the Caledonian Railway had achieved at Oban. The general principle of an equilibrium between the two main Scottish Companies, with respect both to their own traffic and to their Anglo-Scottish traffic, was upheld.^[28]

After negotiations with Walker between January and May, 1887, the promoters of the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan accepted the North British terms. These were a commitment to send traffic via Craigendoran; a sliding scale of working expenses, decreasing from 60% to 50% of gross revenue as traffic increased; application to the Board of Trade for light railway status under the Act of 1868; and eventual take over by the North British. The North British would supplement the income of the new line to a maximum of £8,000 per year, after deduction of working costs, though this would be recovered if and when the line began to earn more than 4% on the estimated capital of £380,000.^[29] The rebate formula appears more clearly in the renegotiated Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Agreement of 1891 - a last attempt at rescue when it was becoming clear that the West Highland had overshadowed the Crinan scheme.

If the net revenue ... is not sufficient to pay a dividend of three and one half per cent. per annum on the paid up share capital then the (North British Company) shall out of the mileage receipts accruing to them from traffic including mails passing over their system to, from or over the (Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway) contribute such sum as may be necessary to make up that dividend so far as the proportion of the mileage receipts accruing in each half year ... from the traffic passing over the North British Railway ... from or to the (Crinan Railway) after the deduction of fifty per cent. of such revenue (for working expenses) shall suffice to pay such deficiency ...^[30]

Formans & McCall not only estimated the engineering costs but also provided detailed traffic figures embracing livestock, wool, domestic coal, bunkering coal, dressed paving stone and road metal, fish, farm supplies and mail.^[31] Clearly David MacBrayne was amenable: an agreement was scheduled to the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Act, making provision for rail-steamer interchange at Ardrishaig and Crinan.^[32] Powers were taken to acquire the Dunoon - Strachur stagecoach business from the Glasgow & Inverary Steamboat Company.^[33] Everything nevertheless turned on North British support. It is possible that the North British would have dropped the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan in return for a larger share of Oban traffic, whether via Callander or by a new route from Glasgow, if and when built. The Caledonian Railway

offered no such concession, and Walker renewed his pledge to the Crinan Company. But this did not attract sufficient capital.

No more was heard, after 1883, of the Ardlui - Fort William line which had been the final proposal of the defeated Glasgow & North Western promoters, until the 'West Highland' came forward in 1887-8. But the strategic importance of Glen Falloch, by which valley all the new routes from Glasgow converged on Crianlarich, had been emphasised; and both the Caledonian Railway and the North British were alive to the possibilities of occupying the Glen.

The Caledonian Company might not be able, in the end, to prevent the piecemeal development of a shorter route to Oban. However, with the Callander & Oban established at the head of Loch Lomond and the Caledonian intent on obtaining independent access to Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven, the damage could be limited. The prospective cut-off line from Glasgow to Crianlarich would not be entirely under North British control, and any North British claim for access to Oban would be the weaker. If and when new construction closed the gap between, say, Helensburgh or Balloch and Glen Falloch, the Caledonian could press for running powers or joint ownership. For some observers, the Caledonian Company's new concern for Glen Falloch and upper Loch Lomond signalled an indirect attack on the North British monopoly of Dunbartonshire. The Glasgow Central Railway and the Lanarkshire & Dunbartonshire Railway, both Caledonian protégés, provided the main assault. What the Caledonian called aggression ("The main object of the North British Company is to tap ... Oban traffic ... In all fairness we ought not to be saddled with a junction that would so harass us ..."),^[34] the North British called self-defence ("It is a question of whether the Caledonian ... are to pierce the Dunbartonshire district from the north, or whether we are to protect it by going to Crianlarich.").^[35] No doubt the North British had designs on Oban and might be tempted to back any project, like MacKenzie's direct Glasgow - Fort William line, which intersected the Callander & Oban route. But the North British had other concerns, not least the safeguarding of Dunbartonshire and Loch Lomond.

A Glen Falloch Bill was lodged for parliamentary session 1887-8, to authorise a Crianlarich - Ardlui line.^[36] This was apparently a local speculation, not to be confused with the Glen Falloch branch sponsored by the Callander & Oban Company in 1888-9. It was a classic "contractors' railway", promoted in the expectation that Caledonian and North British would bid to control the line once built. The Mar-

quess of Breadalbane, a director of the Highland Railway, the Caledonian and the Callander & Oban, supported the scheme. Breadalbane's solicitors became agents for the Bill. Duncan Fraser of Dalnally the main promoter, had coaching and hotel interests; he was Breadalbane's tenant. William Menzies, another Breadalbane tenant, was also named. The survey was by Benjamin H. Blyth of Cunningham, Blyth & Westland, who had laid out the Callander & Oban Railway and were now consulting engineers for the Caledonian Railway. It is possible that the Caledonian Company had prior knowledge but relied on Breadalbane's influence to protect them - as with the Killin Railway, nominally independent but in practice an appendage of the Callander & Oban.^[37] Whatever the explanation, when the North British entered the field the Caledonian persuaded Breadalbane and the contractor to withdraw the Bill. Walker had seen his chance to block the Callander & Oban from Loch Lomond. The Caledonian board, according to Thompson, felt strongly that their compliance was being extorted and declined to offer more than a working agreement. Walker then offered a North British guarantee, based on the recent agreement between his Company and the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway.^[38]

Ostensibly the scheme failed not because the Caledonian applied pressure to have it wound up but because Sir James Colquhoun and the Colquhoun Trustees (Luss Trustees) would not co-operate.^[39] Their estate marched with Breadalbane's land at the head of Loch Lomond, and they owned Ardlui pier. Blyth later revealed that the Colquhouns had insisted on an impossible clause. Any party undertaking new construction from the South to link up with the Glen Falloch Railway was to be granted running powers to Crianlarich, i.e. the Caledonian would not be able to block a future North British attempt to establish a more direct route to Oban. Running powers "for a railway that was not yet in existence", as Blyth put it, were inadmissible.^[40] The general tenor of the North British Company's negotiations is revealed in Walker's correspondence with the Colquhouns' solicitors, Tawse & Bonar. At the end of January, 1888 Walker asked the Trustees to propose joint Caledonian and North British control of Glen Falloch, the Breadalbane portion to be Caledonian and the Colquhoun portion North British with the 'frontier' at Inveraman. If this was refused the Trustees should oppose the Bill, on the understanding that the North British would submit their own Glen Falloch scheme, to the Colquhouns' satisfaction, in 1888-9. The Trustees declined. Nor were they ready to part with Ardlui pier.^[41] A blocking scheme in Glen Falloch offered the Colquhouns little. The line must be carried south to Tarbet and Arrochar, or be otherwise linked with the often-suggested line north from Helensburgh. The Luss Trustees recognised that this would create a new route to Oban but declined to take sides between the Caledonian and North British.

While they do not wish to stand in the way of ... a public benefit viz a railway connection between Glasgow (and) Oban via Helensburgh, they do not think that the advantages ... to themselves or their tenants ... warrant them (supporting) any railway .., further than by giving the land on reasonable terms.^[42]

When the Fort William 'town party' took shape at the end of 1887, the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway had just been approved and the Glen Falloch scheme had just been lodged. The North British Company stood behind the one and could not be indifferent to the other. MacKenzie and his associates had good reason to hope that their Glen Coe line would become yet another North British option and every reason to believe that Caledonian and North British could be set at loggerheads. Tawse & Bonar were well aware that a Crianlarich - Helensburgh line could be the Glasgow link which Fort William wanted: this was at the very least implied in Walker's correspondence and in press reports of MacKenzie's initiative.^[43] Walker subsequently testified that he had not put the Fort William interest in touch with the Luss Trustees.^[44] But Boyd recalled that, when he and Cameron met Walker and Wieland in February 1888, they re-examined the Glasgow & North Western route (Glen Falloch and the eastern margin of Loch Lomond) before considering a route adapted to the wishes of the Colquhouns (Glen Falloch, Arrochar and Helensburgh). Nothing was settled save for Walker's assurance that "Breadalbane and his friends" would not be allowed to block Glen Falloch.^[45] Thereafter the Luss Trustees decided to commission their own survey north from Helensburgh, while both the Glen Coe line and the coastal line by Connel Ferry were stalled. In Walker's subsequent dealings with 'town' and 'country' representatives, on into the summer of 1888, the Colquhouns' plans went unmentioned - or so Walker claimed.^[46]

Did Walker drag out negotiations until a coherent line between Helensburgh and Crianlarich had been surveyed? At the end of April he wrote to Boyd and to Cameron postponing a further interview.^[47] That Cameron now moved away from Fort William, leaving Boyd to "recover" much of the earlier correspondence, explains some of the delay.^[48] Walker was also intent on gaining control of the Loch Lomond Steamboat Company, which finally surrendered during 1888 ("We could not help ourselves.") to the threat that the North British would run rival vessels.^[49] The Steamboat Company had long been caught between Caledonian and North British over through fares to the North via Loch Lomond and revenue from summer excursions. Boyd and Malcolm met Walker on 4 August. According to Boyd, Malcolm told him, prior to the meeting, that the landowners despaired of help from the Caledonian and would accept any line backed by the North British. Malcolm admitted only an "indirect" knowledge of Caledon-

ian intentions. He had “happened” to be in Edinburgh when Boyd invited him, at short notice, to see Walker. He had told Boyd and Walker that there had been “nothing definite from the Caledonian”. The country meeting envisaged by Lochiel with a view to giving firmer shape to the coastal scheme was now pointless.^[50] Walker’s memory was that they had discussed the Glen Coe line in a general way. He had indicated that his Company would be willing to work it, but made no other promise. He had understood that the Caledonian Railway would not support a Connel Ferry - Fort William line. (“They came to us because the Caledonian Company refused ..”).^[51]

Boyd also recorded what he claimed was a chance encounter with Thompson later that August. Returning from Perth to Fort William via Callander, Boyd had changed trains at Dunblane. With time on his hands, he asked the stationmaster whether it would be possible to contact A.G. Morrison (protagonist of the Rannoch route), who lived in Bridge of Allan. The stationmaster then pointed Boyd out to Thompson, who forced a brief, tense but superficially good humoured conversation. Thompson did not rule out, and would not allow Anderson of the Callander & Oban to rule out, a branch from Tyndrum to Fort William via Glen Coe. He advised Boyd to hold new public meetings but declined, until he had the approval of the Caledonian directors, to provide a letter to be read at such meetings. There is no evidence that this was followed up or that Boyd reported the encounter to Walker or Wieland. The episode did not reach the parliamentary record.^[52] Malcolm was later singled out by the Caledonian as particularly blameworthy, for helping the ‘town’ interest to pursue the North British while keeping the Caledonian in play. Malcolm had promised to re-open negotiations for the coastal line in the course of the summer. His excuse was that the Lochaber landowners were discouraged by the Caledonian Company’s initial response and by Fort William’s hostility towards the Connel route. This had been common knowledge, extinguishing any promise he might have given.^[53]

Meanwhile the Luss Trustees had instructed Charles Forman of Formans & McCall. Forman had laid out the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway and surveyed the proposed extension from Aberfoyle to Crianlarich. In the 1870s he had prepared plans for a Glasgow - Loch Lomond - Oban line, to complete, or supersede, the Callander & Oban Railway, then halted at Tyndrum. His firm had been responsible, too, for the proposed narrow gauge feeder line from Fort William to Tyndrum. And he was the engineer of the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway.^[54] There seems little to choose between Forman's notorious "tendency to project lines"^[55] and the way in which Wilkinson & Jarvis had promoted the Glasgow & North

Western Railway, save that Wilkinson & Jarvis were vulnerable as ‘outsiders’ with a controversial trunk line scheme, while Forman was very much an ‘insider’ with an eye for local schemes which could be turned into something bigger.

(Mr) Forman ... whenever he can see an opportunity of setting (sic) the North British Company and the Caledonian ..., does so, promoting these lines all over the country and getting them taken up by the North British ... ^[56]

But Formans & McCall also handled Caledonian projects, including the Glasgow Central line and the Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire, and Charles Forman, always ready to graft new promotions to his current commissions and always his own man, was not entirely congenial to the North British management. ^[57] This appears more fully in Chapter 8.

Tawse & Bonar did not deal directly with Formans & McCall. The business was placed in the hands of Edinburgh solicitor, George MacRae (MacRae, Flett & Rennie), described as a relative of the Colquhoun family.^[58] Forman later claimed that MacRae soon modified his instructions. The survey was to be continued beyond Crianlarich by Glen Coe to Fort William and the western sea. At this stage, said Forman, he had no dealings with the North British Company or with other landowners.^[59] North of Crianlarich the route was cobbled together from earlier work by Formans & McCall, and west of Fort William the job was hastily done when the proprietors insisted.^[60] In Parliament in 1889 it would be Walker’s version of events that the original ‘West Highland’ project had faded away after his final meeting with Boyd and Malcolm the previous August, while Forman’s scheme advanced largely unknown to the North British Company. On 3 October 1888 he wrote to Malcolm, re-iterating that the North British could do no more than work and maintain a railway to Fort William for 50% of gross receipts; a capital commitment was out of the question. Walker admitted that he had been in contact with MacRae during September, but MacRae had wanted only a general promise of good will. A working agreement did not arise until Forman’s scheme had succeeded. It had been for Forman and MacRae to deal with the promoters. Walker added blandly that the North British Company always waited for proprietors to agree amongst themselves.^[61]

A copy of Forman's report, costing the route from Helensburgh to Roshven via Glen Coe, was in Boyd's hands by 20 August, 1888.^[62] Some two weeks later, Robert Yellowlees, provost of Stirling, wrote to Boyd that Forman would “take a run ... to Fort William” to meet both ‘town’ and ‘country’

representatives.

Mr.F. has a great deal of influence with Railway people in the South and would be very willing to assist ... your friends in the North ... It is far better that he should have a personal interview with yourself, Lochiel and other interested ... persons ...^[63]

Forman had a house in Stirling, which may explain why Yellowlees was go-between. However, Yellowlees also appears as a promoter, the previous year, of the Stirling and Western District Railway, which offered the North British Company an independent route from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Stirling, parallel with the Caledonian main line over which the North British exercised running powers.^[64] In Ewen Cameron's correspondence at the beginning of 1888 is a hint that Yellowlees's scheme had entered the calculations of the 'town party'. Wieland, wrote Cameron, would be able to judge whether a new line south of Crianlarich "should go ... to Balloch and thence to Glasgow or Eastward via Stirling to Edinburgh".^[65] The "Eastward via Stirling" option might have attracted Walker and Wieland if the North British had decided to take up the Stirling and Western District scheme.

Forman agreed to see Boyd and "one or two of the most influential people".^[66] By late September MacRae was in touch with MacKenzie and Malcolm.^[67] According to Lord Abinger, Forman had always been prepared to carry his survey to Lochaber. It was the landowners who "made a very strong push" to continue beyond Fort William to Roshven, which would bring additional traffic and relieve distress.

Mr. Charles Forman (was) proposing to make a line at the instance of the Colquhoun Trustees ... and heard that there was a very strong desire ... that the railway should be continued as far as Fort William, and we met (Forman and MacRae) at Fort William ... (We) have only the local traffic of the mainland until we get to Roshven, and we not only want a railway because we think it will benefit our own properties, but we feel very strongly that this is a line which will do more good to the indigent population of these wretched Highlands than anything else that can be conceived.^[68]

Early in October Forman and MacRae called on Lochiel at Achnacarry. Lochiel guessed that Walker was well-informed but primarily interested in the cut-off route to Oban. Provided Forman and MacRae could engage the North British more closely, Lochiel agreed that he and Abinger would go to work on their fellow proprietors, using Forman's figures.

(We) will do what we can with our neighbours, to get them to consent to their land being taken or traversed by the railway and you ... will do what you can to get the North British Company to help us financially; the

North British Company cannot make the railway without us, and we cannot make the railway without the North British... (They) gave me to understand that they had not approached the North British Company, if I may use the word, 'officially', but whether they had had any private communications ... I cannot say.^[69]

As with the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan promotion, Forman offered engineering estimates and revenue projections. Earnings west of Fort William were put at £7 per mile per week, between Crianlarich and Fort William at £9 per mile per week, and south of Crianlarich, including Oban traffic, at £12 per mile per week, rising to £15 per mile per week south of Garelochhead.^[70] In Parliament in 1889 Abinger would allude vaguely to his connections in the City. He certainly approached the prestigious contractors, Lucas & Aird. David Lucas ("a very old and valued friend") arranged for his partner, John Aird M.P., to visit Inverlochy, inspect the route and endorse Forman's estimates.^[71]

After the Achnacarry interview, MacKenzie introduced Forman at a public meeting in Fort William, where the title "West Highland Railway" was re-adopted. According to Boyd, the same meeting overwhelmingly approved Morrison's route by Rannoch Moor and Glen Coe.^[72] It is impossible to believe that this important change had not been discussed at an earlier date. And it would be remarkable if Forman, Morrison and Yellowlees were not acquainted. But it is not clear when Forman first considered Rannoch Moor or whether he took Aird's opinion. D.P. MacDonald recalled that it was "October or November" [after the public meeting?] when MacKenzie assured him that Rannoch had been chosen and that Forman's name would secure North British backing. Only then did MacDonald advise the Caledonian that he was joining the West Highland camp.^[73] The West Highland Railway Bill quickly deposited for 1888-9 was certainly a piecemeal production. Between Helensburgh (Craigendoran) and Crianlarich the route was largely settled and deviations were negotiated without much difficulty while the Bill went through Parliament in 1889.^[74] Across Rannoch, Forman drew on - or rediscovered, Telford's survey for a Killin-to-High Bridge (Spean Bridge) road, and in Glen Spean, he may have used the Laggan survey of the 1860s.^[75] North from Crianlarich, landowner opposition had not entirely been overcome. There was a further examination of Rannoch Moor in January, 1889 - a foolhardy expedition which has passed into legend;^[76] and the West Highland Company would return to Parliament in 1889-90 for powers to deviate from the route approved the previous session. The Fort William - Roshven section was expendable, a marker for the future and a bid for public sympathy.

The named promoters of the West Highland Railway represented a range of interests, but predominantly the landed interest, from Helensburgh to western Inverness-shire. Abinger and Lochiel were the principal spokesmen. Abinger's experience as an active supporter of the Glasgow & North Western scheme complemented Lochiel's parliamentary experience and service on the Napier Commission. The key note was local endeavour, emulating the earlier efforts of those who had created the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway. The point was pressed at every opportunity: it was a "bona fide attempt by the ... proprietors of the country ... to provide for their own wants and the development of the district"; and there was not one dissenting voice of any importance between Helensburgh and Fort William.^[77] Abinger hoped that the landowners would find £150,000 towards Forman's figure of £740,000.^[78] Remembering the Glasgow & North Western and perhaps wary of what opponents might make of Forman's activities or the early involvement of Lucas & Aird, counsel for the Bill insisted that it was "no contractor's or speculator's line".^[79] The North British Railway remained in the background as long as possible, disclaiming all intention of damaging the Highland Company or the Caledonian Company.

On 5 December, 1888 Lochiel met Walker and the North British chairman, the Marquess of Tweeddale, in London, where they arranged a formal application to the North British directors. On 10 January, 1889 Abinger and Lochiel had a long meeting with the North British board in Edinburgh and, according to Lochiel, won over the doubters among the directors. When the West Highland Bill came to Parliament Lochiel insisted that the West Highland promoters had approached the North British and not vice versa.^[80] The North British Company thereafter prepared a working agreement and a guarantee, subsequently explained at some length to the parliamentary committees.

(If) the line does not, upon ... its local receipts, earn sufficient to pay 4½ per cent, out of all the through traffic upon the North British system, wherever it is going, the North British Company will contribute to the full extent of that traffic after taking off ... 50 per cent for working expenses, so far as is necessary to make up the 4½ per cent. Supposing ... that a gentleman at Fort William was going to London, ... he would travel ... to Craigendoran, and ... go by the North British ... system to Edinburgh, and so on to Berwick, ... and in respect of his fare, the mileage ... from Fort William to Craigendoran would belong to the West Highland Railway. (But) if their receipts are not sufficient to make 4½ per cent, then the mileage ... of that passenger from Craigendoran to Berwick, after 50 per cent has been deducted ..., will be handed over ... to help make up their dividend. (The) Promoters are advised that with ... that guarantee ... there will be no difficulty in raising the capital ...^[81]

The North British guarantee was vital, as was the Company's pledge to find the final £150,000 of capital

if the guarantee failed to attract enough investment. This promise was made, to good effect, during Walker's parliamentary examination. There is some suggestion that Walker had already undertaken to match the landowners' contribution.^[82]

In other respects the hand of the North British was largely hidden. Walker advised the promoters to drop their branch from Spean Bridge to the Caledonian Canal; it might be taken as a thrust towards Inverness, unnecessarily provoking the Highland Railway. It was left to Lochiel and other witnesses to show how the West Highland Company would generate its own traffic without injuring the Highland Company or the Callander & Oban. Walker required that track be laid to North British specifications instead of the lighter formation which Forman had costed. He also required some easing of curves and gradients.^[83] Forman claimed that any contractor "would take my railway on my estimate", and fellow engineers, including some who had attacked Waldron-Smith's Glasgow & North Western survey, agreed that Forman's work, within its self-imposed economies, was sound.^[84] Aird was enthusiastic. ("The way it contours the hills ... and at the same time lessens the cost ... is something remarkable.")^[85] Opponents disputed his figures but admitted his authority. ("Whatever opinion we may have, (if) Lucas & Aird say they will do it, and they lose £100,000, as we believe they will, they will carry it out.")^[86] The promoters could not deny that the North British guarantee was crucial, but they made every effort to present their scheme as an independent venture, which had won the backing of an able engineer and prestigious contractors. Only then had the North British Company offered benevolent support, since the Caledonian declined to do so. It must be assumed that Walker approved, if he did not prescribe, this strategy.

No doubt Walker always intended to take control. In March, 1890, Abinger, Chairman of the West Highland, moved aside for Tweeddale and another North British director, Randolph Wemyss, joined the board. The MacKintosh and Stewart of Kinlochmoidart resigned. On Abinger's death in 1892 James Renton increased the North British presence.^[87] The North British took parliamentary powers to contribute to West Highland capital, as Walker had promised.^[88] When Lucas & Aird won the West Highland contract and began construction (October, 1889), they bound themselves to take £190,000 of shares, which the North British would purchase on completion of the work.^[89] By bringing forward the date of purchase, to resolve a quarrel between the West Highland Company and the contractors over additional payments, the North British hold was strengthened.^[90] However the North British guarantee agreed in 1889 did not extend west of Fort William. The West Highland Bill conferred powers to build the Fort William-Roshev

line, but did not say how it was to be financed or worked; and it is not surprising that the House of Lords Committee struck out this section of the scheme.^[91] The North British Company's attitude to the further development of the West Highland route is examined in later Chapters.

Opponents alleged that the West Highland promoters had drawn the shortest possible line to the sea and trailed it before Parliament in the hope of subsidy. It had been a calculated attempt to divert attention from the injury which the West Highland must do to the Highland Company and to the Callander & Oban, by playing on public sympathy for the crofters and fishermen of the West.^[92] Opinion remained divided between Roshven and Mallaig as prospective railheads on the Arisaig coast, the more so after Forman's parliamentary examination confirmed that the Roshven line and Roshven harbour had been hasty additions to the West Highland project.^[93] No west-of-Fort William line would be built until the West Highland Railway was opened. Parliament took the view that there was time enough to examine all the possible west coast schemes, including proposals for lines north of the Dingwall & Skye route, after which one or more of them might qualify for subsidy as the Napier Report had suggested. Discussion of the subsidy question is resumed in Chapter 5.

The Glasgow & North Western Railway had aimed at Inverness, with an "Arisaig" branch as something of an afterthought. Coming to Parliament before the Napier Report was ready, this had seemed a clumsy attempt to give the colour of public interest to a blatantly speculative promotion. The West Highland promoters marshalled local support much more carefully, denied any intention attacking the Highland Company and offered Roshven as the new railhead desired by the Napier Commission. They reminded their opponents that they had not asked for state assistance. It had proved impossible to engage the Government to support a line to Fort William and the west coast in the way envisaged by the 'town' and 'country' parties in 1887-8. Now Fort William would have a railway. If this was in some degree the by-product of North British strategic calculation, it was also very much the product of a community campaign headed by the landed interest. In any case, no subsidy was involved, and the possibility of some assistance for a later advance to the sea remained open, much as the Napier Report had anticipated. On the whole the West Highland gained by the ambiguity in which the Bill emerged from the Lords Committee. Had the promotion been approved on its main intentions (providing a 'direct' route to Oban, developing Glasgow residential business and opening up the country between Crianlarich and Lochaber)? Was the new railway to be seen above all as a Glasgow-Fort William route, with Fort William as stepping stone to the west coast?

Lochiel's evidence combined two themes - local endeavour and the development of new traffic beyond the effective range of the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban. He reminded the Committees how Lochaber proprietors had supported first the Hope-Scott promotion and then the Glasgow & North Western. ("This present scheme...starts on a more hopeful basis...and if (it) fails, goodbye to any railway in the West Highlands for... the present generation, if not for ever.") The West Highland Railway had all the virtues claimed for the older established Highland Company and Callander & Oban. ("We are going to help ourselves... and without asking the Government for a shilling; and we should think it a very hard thing if we are refused.. .") The Highland route had its own catchment and did not stand to lose a single passenger or a single bale of goods. Callander & Oban territory was in some sense being invaded but "we...will still compensate them in other shapes".^[94]

Highland Railway and West Highland seemed to converge north of Rannoch; in reality they were separated by the empty heights of Ben Alder forest, whereafter they diverged once more. Lewis and much of Skye, besides the remote North West, would continue to look to the Highland's Strome Ferry route. If Long Island south from Harris and the rest of Skye looked to Roshven and the West Highland instead of Strome - or Oban, this would be largely new business, not stolen business. Lochiel conceded that the West Highland would intercept traffic which reached Oban by steamer; but much of this traffic "naturally" belonged to Fort William and was only being recaptured. He made much, as did Walker, of general exchange at Crianlarich: if Callander & Oban business was transferred to the West Highland route via Helensburgh, nevertheless there would be much West Highland business routed via Callander, and the Callander & Oban and Caledonian Companies might well have the better of the bargain. All experience proved that, in the long run, a new line made for a general increase in traffic, especially tourist traffic.^[95]

The Highland Railway and the Caledonian were at first united in opposition, as they had been against the Glasgow & North Western. But, on the face of things, Inverness was not immediately in danger, and other injuries - for example, the likely diversion of droves from Dalwhinnie, could not be pressed too hard when farmers so clearly welcomed the prospect of readier despatch via the West Highland.^[96] It was demonstrable that the Highland Railway did not serve Lochaber. With Roshven rejected, Strome Ferry was safe for the moment. Dougall and his directors chose to come to terms, rather than prolong what was likely to be a losing battle into the House of Commons. The ensuing Great Glen Agreement, or "Ten Years Truce" (3 July, 1889), saw Lochiel for the West Highland promoters and Walker for the North British

Company agree to delay any expansion ‘north or east of Banavie’ for a decade after the completion of the West Highland line to Fort William, a formula which neutralised the Great Glen but did not rule out extension of the West Highland to the coast. The North British contributed £500 to the Highland Company’s expenses in opposing the West Highland in the House of Lords. In a postscript the signatories agreed that a Laggan line between the Highland Railway in Strathspey and the West Highland in Glen Spean would not be covered by the agreement. Thus the Highland Railway withdrew to fight another day for Inverness and the west coast, leaving the Caledonian isolated. The Truce not only eased the passage of The West Highland Bill but also sounded a warning that neither the Highland Company nor the North British would willingly give in to untimely local pressure for further promotions in the Great Glen.^[97]

Neither Anderson of the Callander & Oban Company nor Thompson of the Caledonian had expected Forman’s promotion to reach Parliament in 1888-9.^[98] With insufficient time to lodge a competing bill for a Connel Ferry - Fort William line, the Caledonian could only pledge that the branch would be fully financed and properly submitted in the following session, provided that the West Highland Railway was abandoned.^[99] There was time to lodge a Glen Falloch Bill, based on Blyth’s survey of 1887. (Without the record of the Callander & Oban Glen Falloch Bill of 1888-9, the earlier Glen Falloch scheme would be extremely obscure.) Thompson argued that this was not another block line but a legitimate attempt to safeguard Oban traffic via Loch Lomond. At the very least the Ardlui - Crianlarich section of the West Highland Railway must be jointly operated.

The North British Railway ... have control of the south end of the loch.. and.. the Callander & Oban Railway.. should have the control at the other end.. .It is more necessary ... since the North British.. have got control of the steamers (and) control of the whole district...(They) will positively starve (the) Callander & Oban line of the tourist traffic.^[100]

Though Thompson lost the Glen Falloch contest, he used it to enlarge the Caledonian case that the West Highland picture of exchange at Crianlarich was flawed and fraudulent.^[101] It would be difficult to co-ordinate infrequent trains on two single-track railways, especially when these trains had both English connections and steamer connections. This is what Thompson and Anderson could be expected to say. More telling was their attack on the North British Company’s West Highland guarantee. Contributory traffic being the heart of the matter, the North British would take all they could via Helensburgh, whatever Lochiel and other witnesses said, and it was to the advantage of the West Highland Company that the North British should do so. The Callander & Oban Glen Falloch branch would have linked the Loch Lomond district

with Killin, Stirling and Perth, via Crianlarich. The West Highland would carry all the traffic round by Glasgow. The same would apply to fish from Roshven or livestock from Lochaber. Assurances that some of this traffic would transfer to the Callander & Oban east of Crianlarich, compensating for, say, the loss of Ardgour business via Oban, were worthless.

Such misrepresentation made it doubly objectionable that the North British wanted access to Oban via the West Highland. Walker offered to forego formal running powers if the Caledonian agreed to exchange passenger traffic.^[102] The West Highland promoters remained confident that the North British would offer a Glasgow - Oban service and the Caledonian a Stirling - Fort William service, with coaches transferred at Crianlarich.^[103] Thompson alleged that the North British wanted to monopolise Loch Lomond and create a cut-off route to Oban. Walker had already written-off Roshven by refusing a guarantee and, given the chance, would abandon Fort William too. Why else were Forman's parliamentary plans so arranged that the Craighendran - Crianlarich section and the spur connecting with the Oban line stood apart from the sections north of Crianlarich? Would the latter ever be built?^[104] In the event, running powers to Oban were denied and the West Highland Company was required to complete construction to Fort William in a single operation.^[105]

The promoters claimed that every landowner along the West Highland was in favour of the new railway or, at worst, stood neutral.^[106] In fact, the Earl of Morton and professor Blackburn at Roshven refused to be placated.^[107] The Roshven line touched Craigag, an outlying corner of Morton's Conaglen estate, and terminated within sight of Blackburn's house. Their opposition ceased to matter when the Lords rejected this portion of the project. With the backing of the Luss Trustees, the route was broadly secure from Helensburgh to Ardlui; to satisfy the Colquhouns, Forman eliminated the obtrusive causeways he had planned along upper Loch Lomond. There were alterations at Craighendran to meet the wishes of Middleton Campbell of Colgrain. The small proprietors at Shandon and at Finnart were persuaded to withdraw their objections, which the Caledonian Company was said to have encouraged.^[108] North from Loch Lomond the efforts of Abinger and Lochiel eventually succeeded. All the landlords were agreeable. (Recriminations came later.) Through Crianlarich and Tyndrum to Bridge of Orchy, the promoters were at first opposed by the Marquess of Breadalbane. Despite his association with the Companies hostile to the West Highland, Breadalbane agreed to withdraw his petition in return for special clauses protecting his salmon fishing in Glen Orchy and £1,000 compensation for disturbance to his Blackmount deer forest.^[109]

Across Rannoch Moor and into Glen Spean, Sir Robert Menzies was a supporter, while Colonel Walker of Lochtreighead was initially an opponent. It is clear that Colonel Walker's subsequent agreement depended on his selling Corrou forest to Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and that Stirling-Maxwell's plans for Corrou depended on rail access.^[110] The best route through Glen Spean invaded The MacKintosh's Brae Lochaber property. The MacKintosh was well-disposed to the Highland Company, whose Aviemore cut-off would serve his main property at Moy; but he agreed to become, though very briefly, a West Highland director.^[111] The remainder of the route lay safely in Abinger's estate of Inverlochy.

The West Highland Railway Bill lodged in November, 1889 (West Highland Railway Act, 1890) sought powers to alter the route on Rannoch Moor, in Glen Spean and on the final approach to Fort William.^[112] The Rannoch deviation was part of the arrangement between Colonel Walker and Stirling-Maxwell. Parliament upheld the objections of the Appin Trustees, who protested that the new alignment threatened their Black Corries deer forest.^[113] The sale of Corrou was completed nonetheless. The Glen Spean deviation, negotiated with The MacKintosh, was approved: it spared the cost of two sizeable viaducts.^[114] The revised entry to Fort William met Abinger's concern for the amenity of new Inverlochy Castle (Torlundy) and gave sidings into D.P. MacDonald's distilleries. This too was approved, together with a tiny extension of the line along Fort William foreshore to connect with MacDonald's pier, which the West Highland Company now purchased.^[115]

The Act of 1890 also authorised a short branch to Banavie, on the Caledonian Canal, from a junction on the Torlundy - Fort William deviation.^[116] The branch would link the Oban steamers with the steamers plying between Banavie and Inverness, and there would be distillery traffic. The Banavie line was complementary to the agreement whereby the West Highland obtained all MacDonald's business. Though the ambiguous position of the West Highland scheme without Roshven turned out, on the whole, to be an advantage, the promoters went forward to the Commons uncomfortably aware that they might have overplayed their hand in the Lords, where the value of new fish traffic to railway and community alike had been repeatedly stressed. Without Roshven, they might founder in the Commons. They had to proclaim that the west-of-Fort William arm would be revived as soon as possible and that Lochaber in the meantime was worth developing. MacDonald's traffic, including his traffic via Banavie, was by far the largest single source of revenue north of Crianlarich.

(Our) case on public grounds has been much weakened by the loss of (Roshven) although we may still be allowed to show that ... a Railway to Fort William is a necessary step towards ... the Coast and that we have this ... as an end to be ultimately accomplished. ... We will have to produce new (traffic) tables for the Commons (and) I would like to get (Mr. MacDonald) to say that he would prefer to obtain his barley and coals by our line ...^[117]

By stressing the value of MacDonald's business, Walker countered the Caledonian charge that the North British had no real interest in Fort William.

Nicholson of Arisaig testified that all the districts westward saw Banavie as a useful railhead for livestock and general goods, pending the revival of the Roshven line.^[118] The branch was in some sense a pledge that the West Highland route would be extended to the sea. It was also a substitute for the Caledonian Canal branch (Spean Bridge-to-Loch Lochy) dropped from the West Highland Bill of 1888-9 to appease the Highland Railway. With Roshven for the moment out of the reckoning, the Highland Company's main concern was to exclude the West Highland from the Great Glen. The Banavie branch was acceptable provided that the Ten Years Truce ruled out new promotions "north of Banavie". It is clear that all this was resolved in the middle months of 1889. August saw the West Highland Act secure: then the Banavie branch was included, along with the three deviations and the foreshore extension, in the supplementary Bill deposited for session 1889-90.

At Fort William (or Banavie), the West Highland Railway was some sixty miles from Inverness. The Rannoch-and-Spean route reduced the gap by ten miles. And any attempt by the Highland Company to occupy the Great Glen in defiance of the Truce would find the North British already in possession of northern Lochaber, well posted to argue that the West Highland catchment reached as far as Invergarry and Fort Augustus. The contest for the Great Glen during 1894-7 is discussed in Chapter 8. Did the North British Railway always aim at Inverness, despite disavowals, hoping to achieve in two moves what the Glasgow & North Western promoters had tried to achieve all at once?

A.G. Morrison's arguments, according to Boyd, were decisive, and for Morrison the Rannoch-and-Spean route was simply the cheaper way to Fort William and eventually the west coast. To ensure the goodwill of Parliament and to engage the North British, the West Highland promotion needed a prudent budget, to which the proprietors who would gain from the project must make as large a contribution as

possible. ("The line would be constructed for about half the cost of the Glen Coe line, and we did not have the money in the Highlands unless we got a railway company to take up the scheme.. .")^[119] A standard gauge railway from Glen Orchy by Blackmount and Glen Coe to Lochaber posed engineering problems. Waldron-Smith's answer meant by-passing Ballachulish, as Chapter 2 has described. The narrow gauge railway planned by Formans & McCall circa 1870, which tolerated more abrupt gradients and tighter curves, took much the same alignment as the modern A82 trunk road and passed through Ballachulish. In 1887-8 MacKenzie and his allies envisaged a standard gauge equivalent but did not make a survey.^[120] Forman's intentions in 1888 are not fully recorded. Glen Coe did not favour his "contouring" technique, and it would be surprising if he did not resort, like Waldron-Smith, to relatively expensive terraces and protection works. The 'direct' line by Glen Coe also required a major viaduct across Loch Leven. Rannoch Moor was high and exposed, but the methods of founding (or floating) a railway in boggy ground were well established. (Forman used them on a small scale to carry the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle line over Flanders Moss.) The difficulty - and the expense, lay in the sheer volume of 'fill' needed to consolidate the roadbed.^[121] There is no evidence that the respective costs of the two routes were weighed in detail. Press comment may have entered. The West Highland promoters, intent on the widest public support, cannot have forgotten how Waldron-Smith was attacked for "desecrating" the Glen of Weeping.^[122]

The Rannoch-and-Spean route entailed thirty miles of harsh operating conditions, to which Parliament gave little attention. Landowners and sporting tenants described their stalking experience (and in doing so struck chords with the Committees).^[123] Duncan MacDiarmid, tenant of Sir Robert Menzies's farm at Camusericht, was soothingly mendacious: snowfall was light; there was a hard bottom beneath the bogs.^[124] Nevertheless, the promoters were at pains to hush up the nearly disastrous expedition of January, 1889, when Forman's party, including MacKenzie and the contractor, Robert McAlpine, were benighted on Rannoch Moor.^[125] The main attack came from the much aggrieved communities of Ballachulish and Onich, no longer directly served. Rev. Dr. Alexander Stuart, well-known under the pen-name "Nether Lochaber" condemned the Rannoch line. ("I do not think it would, in fifty years, yield profit... to supply grease enough for the wagon wheels.")^[126] And Thompson claimed that here was further proof how the North British had not looked seriously beyond Crianlarich. It was irresponsible to give even the semblance of support to the wandering line across Rannoch, when this would forestall the much more useful line from Connel Ferry.^[127]

With the Rannoch-and-Spean route chosen, the West Highland promoters affected to have calculated that they could not capture Ballachulish slate from the coastal trading vessels.^[128] When both the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban were able to show that much of their business was affected by water competition, this was a hazardous argument.^[129] Had the Committees probed further, they would have exposed how optimistic were the promoters' projections of expanding traffic and expanding revenue. Quarry business apart, Ballachulish and district had a population approaching that of Fort William. Ballachulish, southern Lochaber and Ardgour wanted the Glen Coe route. The West Highland now offered them only a new railhead at Bridge of Orchy, little better than Tyndrum on the Callander & Oban, or a roundabout journey via Fort William. (The Ardgour hinterland would have used Roshven and could look to a future extension west of Fort William.) Whatever the case for going by Rannoch, there was a cost in traffic surrendered and supporters disappointed. Moreover, the Caledonian Railway would be able to argue that a Callander & Oban branch by the Linnhe coast was still needed. Chapters 6-8 include discussion of Caledonian efforts to reach Fort William and, once there, to claim a share in the West Highland Mallaig Extension. The North British Railway would be obliged to obtain powers for a West Highland branch south from Fort William to Ballachulish. This blocked the Caledonian from Lochaber, though the branch remained unbuilt.

Of necessity, the West Highland case came to include the old argument which the Highland Company and the Callander & Oban had employed to defend themselves. Rannoch-and-Spean was the 'optimum route'. Rannoch station, in the midst of Rannoch Moor but with a new road to Kinlochranoch, Inverlair (Tulloch) in upper Glen Spean, Roy Bridge and Spean Bridge were desirable intermediate railheads. Spean Bridge would become the main concentration point for livestock from the Great Glen and the far North West. The districts south of Fort William, though disappointed of a 'direct' line, would still be served, in co-operation with MacBrayne, whose steamers would connect both with the Callander & Oban and the West Highland. Economies in construction would save resources for a new push to the west coast.^[130]

Thompson challenged Walker that, on his own showing, he was supporting a long and rambling railway through the poorest country for the sake of the traffic of two distilleries. Either Walker did not care what happened beyond Crianlarich or he had other motives and Inverness was his real goal.^[131] And it was undeniable that some of the traffic to be won on the Rannoch and-Spean route would be taken from the Highland Railway, at Aberfeldy, Struan and Dalwhinnie. (Dougall pressed unsuccessfully that

compensation for loss of drove traffic at Dalwhinnie should be written in to the Ten Years Truce.)^[132] On balance, it appears that Walker wanted only to see the West Highland Railway firmly established at Fort William, in control of the southern end of the Great Glen. He ran the risk that Parliament would prefer the Connel Ferry-to-Fort William line, and a future Caledonian assault remained possible. On the other hand, the Great Glen Truce restored tolerable relations with the Highland Company, while leaving options for the future. Along with the claim of 'optimum route' went the right to develop the territory which that route served. Here too the North British Company followed the example of the Highland and the Callander & Oban. Lochaber was now North British territory. Those who expected great things from the West Highland would learn sooner or later that the North British was in control.

If Walker did indeed have a strategy of reaching Inverness in two stages, beginning with Forman's West Highland project, he was ill-advised in any case, whether the line ran by Glen Coe or by Rannoch. To turn Forman's scheme into a moderately fast trunk route would have taken a great deal more than the alterations demanded by the North British Company in the 1889 West Highland Agreement. The Board of Trade imposed a 25mph speed limit, and later permitted a maximum of 40mph.^[133] The engines originally dedicated to the line proved inadequate and the problem persisted until a new generation of mixed-traffic locomotives became available just before 1914. In the meantime the North British had largely relaid all the track. An extension through the Great Glen to Inverness might be laid out to express standard (though at no small cost); the through Glasgow-to-Inverness service would always be constrained by the gradients and curves on the ninety miles from Helensburgh to Glen Spean. Speed was not the sole criterion. The Highland Railway's monopoly would be broken and the North British would have the means to extort better terms of exchange at Perth - always provided that the Highland Railway was not driven to amalgamate with the Caledonian. The West Highland-cum-Great Glen route would capture traffic north and east of Inverness. But the North British could scarcely hope to supersede the established route via Perth; and the Aviemore cut-off, shortening the Perth - Inverness journey may be said to have settled the matter^[134].

On the evidence available, the Rannoch-and-Spean option was chosen, economies apart, because this helped to create that very desirable impression of a united front among the great landowners. Entry to Lochaber was not the issue. Friendly proprietors were well-placed both north and south - Abinger and The MacKintosh held Glen Spean; from Loch Leven through Onich and Corran Ferry no one mattered but Lochiel and Mrs. Cameron-Campbell of Callart. From Helensburgh to Bridge of Orchy all was safe, with

the support of the Colquhouns and the forbearance of Breadalbane. But Breadalbane, who had strongly opposed the Glasgow & North Western, cutting Blackmount forest from Glen Orchy to Glen Coe, much preferred that the West Highland should skirt Blackmount to the east, by Strathtulla into Rannoch. In satisfying Breadalbane the promoters could satisfy Stirling-Maxwell, who wanted a railway at Corrour. And the sale of Corrour satisfied Colonel Walker of Lochtreighead. That George Malcolm of Invergarry became Stirling-Maxwell's factor gives some inkling of the negotiations which must have taken place.

The calculations of 1888-9 were not the calculations of 1894, when the West Highland opened to Fort William. The North British wanted Oban traffic and new residential business within range of Glasgow. By 1894 it was clear that the West Highland would be a continuing burden. Neither Oban traffic nor residential traffic was likely to develop on the scale which the promoters had claimed. A west coast extension was not a paying prospect; but, supported by subsidy, it would generate contributory revenue and improve the overall position of the West Highland Company. If Walker aimed at Inverness, it was in the habitual spirit of the North British Railway's twenty years battle with the Caledonian for mastery of Scotland, when expansion was the watchword and no opportunity was to be overlooked. The 1890s saw a new mood of wary live-and-let-live, exemplified by Walker's successor; and the fight for Inverness which began in 1894 was not of the North British Company's making, save that completion of the West Highland to Fort William sparked off a new round of speculative and pre-emptive promotions. All this is discussed in Chapters 5-8.

Chapter 3 Appendices

I Bills of 1888-89 and 1889-90

The West Highland Railway Bill of 1888-9 (West Highland Railway Act, 1889) went to the House of Lords Committee during March and April, 1889 and to the House of Commons Committee in July.

Railway No.1	Craigendoran~Crianlarich	
Railway No.2	Crianlarich-Fort William	
Railway No.3	Fort William-Roshven	Lost in the Lords
Railway No.4	Crianlarich spur to the Callander & Oban Railway	
Railway No.5	Spean Bridge-Loch Lochy (Caledonian Canal)	Dropped from the Bill
Railway No.6	Fort William foreshore	

For parliamentary and construction purposes, No.1 was paired with No.4 and set apart from Nos.2 and 6. The West Highland Company was required to treat the promotion as a unity.

The Callander & Oban (Glen Falloch) Railway Bill of 1888-89 was grouped with the West Highland Bill and taken in the House of Lords after that House had approved the West Highland. It was lost after a day's evidence (8 April, 1889).

The West Highland Railway Bill of 1889-90 (West Highland Railway Act, 1890) included three alterations to 'Railway No.2', a short extension to 'Railway No.6' and a branch from Fort William to Banavie.

Deviation No.1	Rannoch-Corroul	Disallowed
Deviation No.2	Glen Spean	
Deviation No.3	Torlundy-Fort William	
New Railway No.4	Distillery pier extension	
New Railways Nos.5-7	Banavie branch, with back shunt to canal pier etc. (Junction on Deviation No.3)	

II Promoters of the West Highland Railway, 1888-9

Lord Abinger
Lord Howard of Glossop
Sir James Colquhoun
Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Captain Roderick Colquhoun
Donald P. MacDonald, distiller, Fort William
Robert Stewart of Kinlochmoidart
Alexander Breingan, banker, Helensburgh
James Morrison, chairman, Shandon Hydropathic Company

III Directors of the West Highland Railway Company 1889- 98

August 1889

Lord Abinger, Chairman
Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Captain Roderick Colquhoun
The MacKintosh
Robert Stewart of Kinlochmoidart

March 1890

Marquess of Tweeddale, Chairman	North British Railway Chairman
Lord Abinger, Deputy Chairman	
Donald Cameron of Lochiel	
Captain Roderick Colquhoun	
Randolph G.E. Wemyss	North British Railway director

February 1892 - July 1898

Marquess of Tweeddale, Chairman	North British Railway Chairman
Donald Cameron of Lochiel	
Captain Roderick Colquhoun	
Randolph G.E. Wemyss	North British Railway director
James H. Renton	North British Railway director

Lord Abinger died in 1892. His successor was not directly involved with the West Highland Company but supported the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway.

James Renton helped to finance the completion of the West Highland Railway in 1893-4, pending retrospective legislation for additional capital powers.

IV The Great Glen Agreement ("Ten Years Truce")

Westminster, 3 July, 1889

- 1) The Highland Company to withdraw.
- 2) The North British Company and the promoters of the (West Highland) Bill undertake not to promote directly or indirectly, nor to support the promotion by any other company or persons, nor to contribute to nor work any railway north or east of Banavie for ten years after the opening of the West Highland Railway to Fort-William.
- 3) The Highland Company and North British Company to revise the existing (Perth traffic) agreement between them, and to renew it on revised terms.
- 4) £500 to be paid by the North British Company to the Highland Company towards the ... costs of opposing the (West Highland) Bill.
- 5) (Provision for amplifying these terms).

Donald Cameron
J. Walker
And. Dougall

Addendum

- 6) The restriction in article 2 shall not apply to any railway between the West Highland line at or near Inverlair and the Highland Railway at any point between Kingussie and Dalwhinnie.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 3

1. WHM
Donald Boyd, Proof for West Highland Bill, 1888-9
2. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Donald Cameron of Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
3. WHM
Boyd, Proof
D. P. MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Oban Times, 31 December 1887
4. WHM
N. B. MacKenzie, Proofs for West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4; West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6; and against Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
McKenzie, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
McKenzie, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894
5. WHM
MacDonald, Proofs for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9 and West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
MacDonald, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
WHR
MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
6. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Ewan Cameron to George Wieland, 12, 17, 21 and 29 December 1887
John Walker to Cameron, 18 and 21 December 1887
WHM
Wieland to Cameron 20 and 27 December 1887
7. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1786/1
Cameron to Wieland, 12 December 1887
8. Ibid
9. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1786/1
Walker to Cameron, 18 December 1887
WHM
Walker to Cameron, 20 and 27 December 1887 and 13 January 1888
10. WHM
Boyd, Proof
11. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
12. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889.
13. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
D.P. MacDonald to John Anderson, 28 December 1887, quoted by counsel during Lochiel's Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 1889

- SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland, 16 February 1888
14. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Anderson to MacDonald, 29 December 1887, quoted by counsel during Lochiel's Evidence,
West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 1889
15. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
James Thompson to George Malcolm, 5 January 1888, quoted by counsel during Lochiel's Evidence,
West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons
16. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDonald to Anderson, 28 December 1887
17. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Wilkinson & Jarvis to Boyd, 31 December 1887
18. WHM
A.G. Morrison to Boyd, 2 January 1888
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Boyd, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
19. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland
See also Wieland to Walker, 9 January 1888; Walker to Wieland, 12 January 1888; and Cameron to Wieland,
19 January 1888
20. WHM
Boyd, Proof
Boyd to Lochiel, 10 February 1888
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Boyd, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
21. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Malcolm to Thompson, 22 February 1888, quoted by counsel during Malcolm's Evidence, West Highland
Railway Bill, Lords, 1889
Thompson to MacDonald, date uncertain (MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons,
1889)
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Thompson to Malcolm, 23 (or 27) February 1888
22. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland, 16 February and 3 March 1888
23. WHM
Boyd to Lochiel, 10 February 1888
24. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
J. Gibson, Secretary of the Caledonian Railway, to Malcolm, 7 March 1888
(Malcolm, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons, 1889)
Malcolm to Gibson, 14 March and 16 May 1888, quoted by counsel during Lochiel's Evidence, West Highland
Railway Bill, Lords, 1889
See also Malcolm, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
25. WHM
Boyd to Walker, 30 May 1888
Boyd, Proof

26. SRO/BR/NBR/1/30 and 32
North British Railway Minutes, 1 November 1883 and 3 July 1884
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
James Morrison, Chairman of Shandon Hydropathic Company, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
27. The brief treatment here is based on SRO/BR/CAC/3/2 and SRO/RHP 18010 and 31831.
See also J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, pages 117-8; and plans of the Clyde & Loch Fyne Junction Railway, 1846 SRO, unclassified.
28. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Quoted by counsel during Walker's Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1889
See also Joseph Bolton, Evidence, and Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 and 4 April 1889
29. SRO/BR/CAC/3/2
30. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. Ibid
34. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 5 July 1889
35. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
Speech by counsel, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, Lords, 8 April 1889
36. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
The Glen Falloch promotion of 1887-8 can be reconstructed from the parliamentary record of the nearly identical Callander & Oban promotion in 1888-9
37. J. Thomas, The Callander & Oban Railway, Chapter VI
For Breadalbane, see also SRO/BR/CAL/4/224
38. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
Brief for North British Railway;
Benjamin H. Blyth, Anderson and Thompson, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, Lords, 8 April 1889
39. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
Note on the withdrawal of the 1887-8 Bill, dated 15 March 1888;
Blyth, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, 8 April 1889
40. Ibid
41. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Tawse & Bonar to Walker, 26 January and 6 and 11 February 1888
Walker to Tawse & Bonar, 27 and 31 January, and 6 and 7 February 1888
See also North British Railway Minutes, directors' meetings, 9 February and 8 and 21 March 1888
SRO/BR/NBR/1/34
42. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Tawse & Bonar to Walker, 6 February 1888
43. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Tawse & Bonar to Walker, 11 February 1888
See also Glasgow Herald, 29 February 1888, for a good example of the letters etc. in support of a 'direct' railway to Fort William and Arisaig.

44. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
45. WHM
Boyd to Lochiel, 10 February 1888
46. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
47. WHM
Walker to Boyd, 27 April 1888
Walker to Cameron, 30 April 1888
48. WHM
Boyd, Proof
49. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
Anderson, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, 8 April 1889
Alexander McNiven, director of the Loch Lomond Steamboat Company, Evidence,
Callander and Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, 8 April 1889
50. WHM
Boyd, Proof
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Malcolm, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
51. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
52. WHM
Boyd, Proof
53. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Malcolm, Evidence, and Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons, 1889
54. SRO/RHP 15052 and 47385
Aberfoyle - Crianlarich extension
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/394
Forman, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 1 April 1897, for a brief reference to Oban 'direct'
schemes
SRO/RHP 46426
Tyndrum - Fort William (narrow gauge)
SRO/RHP 18010 and 31831
Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan
55. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/386
Charles Steel, General Manager of the Highland Railway, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, Bill,
Lords, 11 May 1896
56. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 5 April 1889
57. J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, pages 122-3
58. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
59. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Charles Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
60. Ibid.

61. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons, 1889
WHM
Walker to Malcolm
Boyd, Proof
62. WHM
Longhand copy of Forman's report
63. WHM
Robert Yellowlees to Boyd, 8 September 1888
64. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/160 and 585
See also probing questions by counsel re Forman's and Walker's involvement during Forman's Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
65. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland 4 January 1888
66. WHM
Forman to Yellowlees, 15 September 1888.
67. WHM
George MacRae to MacKenzie, 26 September 1888
MacRae to Malcolm 3 October 1888
68. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lord Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
WHM
Abinger, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-89
69. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889.
WHR
Lochiel, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-89
70. WHR
Forman's report
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889
71. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
72. WHR
Boyd, Proof
73. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDonald to Thompson, 26 November 1888 (Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords 1889)
WHR
See also MacDonald, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-89
74. SRO/RHP 47391, with Edinburgh Gazette Notice, 9 April 1889 cf. SRO/RHP 47392
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
75. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
The Scotsman, 13 August 1894.
Forman's speech, Opening of the West Highland Railway, 11 August

76. J. Saxon-Childers, Robert McAlpine, A Biography
J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, pages 44-9 and Appendix 10
77. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
78. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
79. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
80. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
81. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889
82. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889 and Commons, 4 July 1889
83. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, and Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 July 1889
84. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
William Crouch, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889
See also Robert McAlpine, Evidence, Lords, 1 April 1889
85. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
John Aird, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
86. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Exchange between counsel and chairman, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
87. SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
West Highland Railway Minutes, 18 February 1892
88. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/160
North British Railway Bill, 1889-90
89. SRO/BR/WEH/23/3
West Highland Railway, Finance and Miscellaneous
SRO/BR/NBR/1/36
North British Railway Minutes, 14 November 1889
90. SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes, 16 April 1891
J. Thomas The West Highland Railway, pages 60-2
See also North British Railway General Managers Files SRO/BR/NBR/1764/3, passim
91. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 5 April 1889
92. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Andrew Dougall, Secretary and General Manager of the Highland Railway; Dr. Roderick MacDonald M.P.;
Anderson; and Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, April 1889.
See also speeches by counsel, 5 April 1889

93. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March and 1 and 5 April 1889
See also Professor Hugh Blackburn, Captain Henry Moriarty, Sir William Thompson (Lord Kelvin), Blyth, Dougall and Thompson (Caledonian Railway), Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, April 1889
94. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889, and Commons, 3 July 1889
95. Supporters of the West Highland scheme asserted again and again that exchange of traffic with the Callander & Oban Railway at Crianlarich would be mutually advantageous.
For additional examples see Malcolm, Proof and Duncan MacDiarmid (tenant farmer, Camusericht), Proof, WHM
96. For example: SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDiarmid, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 28 March 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Cf. William Menzies (Glen Falloch), Evidence, 27 March 1889, and Donald MacDonald (Skye), Evidence, 29 March 1889
97. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6 and SRO/BR/HR/3/6/1
98. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Anderson, Evidence, and Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons 1889
See also Bolton, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889, and Anderson, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, Lords, 8 April 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
99. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Bolton, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889.
Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 5 July 1889
100. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
Thompson, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway, Glen Falloch, Bill, 6 April 1889
101. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/339
See also Anderson, Evidence, and Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords and Commons, 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
102. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889
103. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 2 July 1889
See also Lochiel, Evidence; Abinger, Evidence; and Malcolm, Evidence, Commons
104. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 4 April 1889, and Commons, 5 July 1889
Speeches by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 5 April 1889
See also Walker, Evidence (cross-examination), Lords and Commons
105. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 5 April 1889 and Commons, 5 July 1889
106. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speeches by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 26 March 1889, and Commons, 2 July 1889
107. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9, Petitions Against
108. SRO/RHP 47391 cf. SRO/RHP 47392
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 2 July 1889
West Highland Railway Bill 1888-9, Petitions Against

109. SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
“New Clauses - for protection of the lands of the Marquis of Breadalbane in the counties of Perth and Argyll”
110. WHM
Sir Robert Menzies, Proofs for West Highland Railway Bills, 1888-9 and 1889-90
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
Abinger, Evidence, Forman, Evidence, and Menzies, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14, 17 and 18 March 1890
111. WHM
The MacKintosh, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
The MacKintosh, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889, and Commons, 3 July 1889
SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
West Highland Railway Minutes
112. SRO/RHP 46438
113. WHM
West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90, Petitions Against
Speeches by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 18 March 1890
114. SRO/RHP 46438
115. WHM
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
Draft agreement between D.P. MacDonald and the West Highland Railway promoters, 8 May 1889
See also SRO/RHP 46438
116. SRO/RHP 46438
117. WHM
MacRae to Malcolm,, 24 April 1889
SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
118. WHM
A.W. Nicholson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 17 March 1890
119. SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
Boyd, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
120. For the route of the narrow gauge line see SRO/RHP 46426
121. J. McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway, Chapter 3.
122. C. Hamilton-Ellis, The North British Railway, page 147
123. SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
For example, Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 3 July 1889
124. WHM
MacDiarmid, Proof, West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 28 March 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
125. SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
See also Note 76 above. Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889
126. SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/342
Rev. Dr. Alexander Stuart, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 4 April 1889

127. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 4 April 1889, and Commons, 5 July 1889
128. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889
129. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1882-3, Petition Against by the Highland Railway.
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Anderson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889
See also Duncan Forbes, hotel keeper, Inveroran, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9 WHM
Forbes testified that sea-and-rail charges to Dalmally, via Oban, were competitive.
130. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Dr Donald Campbell (Ballachulish quarries), Evidence; Angus Buchanan (Strontian), Evidence; and
Stuart, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 5 July 1889
In cross-examining these witnesses, counsel expounded the West Highland case for leaving Ballachulish,
Appin and Ardgour to MacBrayne.
See also A.G. Morrison to Boyd, 2 January 1888 WHM; and Boyd, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill,
Commons, 4 July 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342.
131. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889 (cross-examination)
132. WHM
MacRae to Malcolm, 24 April 1889
133. C. Hamilton-Ellis, The North British Railway, page 153
134. J McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway Chapter 7.
Material relating to engine-power, schedules and condition of track appears intermittently in
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764 and SRO/BR/LNE/8/764.

Chapter 4

The West Highland Railway: expectations and consequences

Chapter 4

In contrast to the politics of promotion examined in Chapter 3, this Chapter addresses the expectations invested in the West Highland Railway and considers how far they were fulfilled.

The West Highland Railway Act, 1889 specified that stations would be provided at upper Helensburgh and several other locations along the Gareloch and Loch Long, to encourage feuing on the Colquhoun estates^[1]. The Shandon Hydropathic Company, associated with the Luss Trustees in the promotion of the West Highland Company, disliked the proposed timetable. Shandon would be served by “residential” trains between Glasgow and Garelochhead. Glasgow - Fort William trains, with through coaches from England, would not call^[2].

(Shandon) Station is the most important on the Gareloch for long distance passenger traffic ... We were repeatedly promised that ... this valuable and increasing traffic would secure the closest attention^[3].

During July - September of 1893 the Hydropathic recorded 1,075 visitors arriving and 1,036 departing, “these being principally from England”. The local trains offered little improvement on existing rail and steamer connections via Helensburgh. Moreover, many visitors made day excursions and would want to sample the new railway; they would be discouraged, and the West Highland would lose revenue, unless Fort William trains stopped at Shandon. A new golf course and other improvements had been planned in anticipation of a through rail link with Edinburgh and London^[4]. Conacher was not sanguine about “residential” business. The stations at Row (Rhu), Shandon and Garelochhead were sited on the hillside - one of the penalties of Forman’s economical engineering; the steamers were more convenient^[5]. A thrice-daily feeder service between Craigendoran and Arrochar & Tarbet, with Glasgow connections, replaced the Glasgow - Garelochhead service; and some Glasgow - Fort William trains were retimed to make local calls along the Gareloch^[6]. This went some way to meet the Hydropathic Company’s complaints.

North of Garelochhead, the West Highland Company’s obligations to the Colquhouns were not clearly defined. The line climbed to Glen Douglas (Craggan), descending again to Arrochar & Tarbet. The local farmers, most of them Colquhoun tenants, petitioned for a siding and loading bank at Glen Douglas passing place^[7]. The North British goods manager thought the outlay justified; no additional staff were needed.

(The) signalman might ... take the necessary records and transmit same to the Arrochar Agent .
(He) will be quite able to take a note of the traffic during the winter months, although it may be a little difficult for him ... during the summer^[8].

Farmers as distant as Luss on Loch Lomond saw Glen Douglas as a useful railhead, when the alternative was a steamer to Balloch. The siding was ready in May, 1895. In addition the local passenger trains to and from Craigendoran made conditional calls^[9].

Conacher was reluctant to provide facilities for Lochlongside, though a site had been chosen near Whistlefield inn, to serve Portincaple and Finnart^[10]. The “house-holders, ratepayers and yearly visitors” of Loch Long protested to the West Highland Company that their station had not been begun^[11]. The Luss Trustees complained that “the want of a station” had prevented the let of Glen Mallie House and deterred several feuing enquiries^[12]. Wieland eventually advised Conacher that he had better instruct the North British engineer to design a simple station^[13]. Since Whistlefield lay on the long gradient to Glen Douglas, the Board of Trade might impose expensive precautions. Conacher delayed, hoping that he could plead unreasonable cost^[14]. In the event Whistlefield siding was worked in one direction only. (Similar restrictions applied elsewhere on the West Highland, adding a day in transit to wagon load traffic.) The halt was opened for goods and passengers in October, 1896 at a cost of some £600^[15].

There were sixteen families at Whistlefield and half-a-dozen at Portincaple, a few farms and two large houses. The Glasgow businessmen in this small community habitually drove to Garelochhead. They claimed that, with the new station, “many who travel only once a week would travel almost daily”^[16]. Conacher was unconvinced. Goods traffic seemed more promising; although Garelochhead was only three miles away, the steep road over the hill to Loch Long made carting difficult. On the other hand, domestic coal was likely to remain with the coastal lighters^[17]. Further pressure came from the fishermen of Loch Long and Loch Goil

When we were requested to sign the Petition in support of the W.H.Railway Bill, we were given to understand that our fish ... would be conveyed from (Whistlefield). (You) receive the fish at Arrochar only (and) we ... get all crowded at the head of the Loch to have the first market ,.. neglecting the proper fishing ... and ... causing great injury to our nets^[18].

Fish could be carted from Portincaple to Whistlefield, said the spokesman, just as readily as from Arrochar pier to Arrochar & Tarbet station. The summer herring fishing in Loch Long and Loch Goil

attracted up to 150 boats. Much of the catch went to Greenock, benefitting the Caledonian Railway and the Glasgow & South Western. A better service via the West Highland would encourage white fishing for the Glasgow market. (The Greenock steamers called too late off Portincaple to make this worthwhile.) Upper Loch Long was overfished with fixed nets, and reliance on Arrochar & Tarbet increased the problem. With drift netting lower down Loch Long and in Loch Goil, and a good rail service from Whistlefield, both the herring trade and the white trade would prosper^[19].

As with the evidence in support of Roshven in 1888-9 (and similar evidence in support of Mallaig in 1893-4), the real figures belied these optimistic forecasts. In June, 1895 and again in July, a total of 37 tons of herring were booked at Arrochar & Tarbet^[20]. In later years boxed fish via Whistlefield was readily accommodated in the brake vans of West Highland passenger trains. However, it is clear that the fishermen, in alliance with other petitioners, were able to engage parliamentary attention and so force the decision on Whistlefield station^[21].

On the West Highland route south of Crianlarich, the only branch seriously considered by the North British Company was the Loch Fyne light railway, from Arrochar & Tarbet to St. Catherine's. This promotion will be examined in Chapter 8. Proposals for a line on the western shore of the Gareloch were "noted"^[22]. The Carrick Castle and Loch Goil community, largely "residential" Glasgow families, pressed for a short branch or tramway from Whistlefield to a new pier at Portincaple, with steamer connection to Loch Goil. Solicitor J.M. Taylor tried to promote a company, which the West Highland or the North British might eventually absorb^[23]. Taylor's proposals gratified the local fishermen. There was some prospect that the Luss Trustees or Dunbartonshire County Council would provide the pier. Forman offered to design a funicular or rack-and-pinion system. Conacher was approached in October, 1893

I saw Mr. Taylor and Mr. Forman . . . The cost of a Cable Tramway (sic) ... was estimated at £7,000, exclusive of... a new road. Mr. Taylor ... was prepared to form a Company if... a guarantee on the Capital were given^[24].

Campbell Douglas of Douglas Pier, Loch Goil, whose brother had been an active and controversial director of the North British Railway, subsequently recommended Taylor and hinted that another director was sympathetic^[25]. The North British board was notoriously factious - which eventually brought down both Tweeddale and Conacher, and it may be that the General Manager chose to tread warily. It certainly

appears that he kept Taylor in play, with no real intention of supporting the scheme. Not unwilling to have Taylor's plans conflated with demands for a station at Whistlefield, both being unwelcome, Conacher replied to correspondents that the station should wait the promotion of the branch or, on other occasions, that the branch must wait until the station was ready^[26]. Having failed to extract any commitment in 1893-4, Taylor tried again when Whistlefield finally opened. He proposed that the West Highland Company promote a rail-and-steamer subsidiary to serve Loch Goil. ("If you have any desire for local support ... I will gladly do what I can.")^[27]

The combined rail-and-steamer fares via the West Highland line and Portincaple could not be greater than those available by Gourock (Caledonian), Greenock (Glasgow & South Western) or Craigendoran (North British). On that basis, the through rates to Loch Goil would be less than the rail fares between Glasgow and Whistlefield. Conacher admitted that rail-and-steamer rates via Craigendoran were calculated to the advantage of the North British Steam Packet Company, which the North British Railway controlled. He could not allow Taylor's syndicate a like concession. The West Highland route was not competitive - unless the North British was ready to risk a fares war on the Clyde Coast^[28]. These negotiations show that the Clyde Coast traffic pool of the 1900s was already taking shape. Echoes of Taylor's project persisted. In 1899 the general merchant at Carrick Castle offered to "run a connection to Whistle field", with passengers left to find their own way between the station and Portincaple. He asked only to be "recognised" in the North British timetables and posters^[29].

Forman designed the Crianlarich spur for through running between Glasgow and Oban by the West Highland route. Other exchange workings, Callander & Oban to West Highland or vice versa, needed reversals and remarshalings. The detailed layout, with new sidings and alterations to the Callander & Oban station, remained to be settled, along with the exact position and structure of the viaduct carrying the new railway over the Callander & Oban line^[30]. During 1893 a different plan was seriously considered. The Caledonian Railway proposed an east-to-north connection at Crianlarich and a second connection across Strathfillan below Tyndrum (as Waldron-Smith had intended for the Glasgow & North Western Railway). This would allow a joint station and easier transfer of both passenger and goods traffic^[31]. Thompson and the Caledonian directors refused to entertain North British demands for a wider review of exchange agreements at Carlisle, Perth and elsewhere besides Crianlarich^[32]. Some North British officers

were suspicious of Caledonian intentions^[33]. Parliament having refused North British running powers to Oban, the Caledonian hit back by claiming access to Fort William and a share in any promotion from Fort William to the west coast, as subsequent Chapters will explain.

After mediation by the Board of Trade, Forman modified the original spur, but could not do so without taking additional land. From 1894 to 1896 there was deadlock. The proprietor, Edward Place of Glen Dochart, owned the Crianlarich hotel; he bargained for the closure of the West Highland Company's new refreshment room. The North British Company stipulated that any settlement must include water rights, land for railwaymen's houses and unrestricted public entry to the West Highland station. The Caledonian refused to move from the Board of Trade award, on which Place's leverage depended, unless negotiations were reopened for additional connections and a joint station^[34]. By the time Place came to terms the West Highland had been two years open and the spur to the Oban line, once the heart of Forman's prospectus, had become, for the North British, a tiresome distraction

The opening of (the) Junction will necessitate the employment of three signalmen and a shunter, not to speak of a Pilot Engine to do the exchange work, and ... the traffic would not justify the expense. (The) spur should not be opened as long as we can keep it closed^[35].

By insisting on these elaborate arrangements, Anderson and Thompson weakened the North British resolve to compete for Oban business -and Conacher was less committed than Walker had been. The North British urged that the regular goods trains be rostered to shunt as required at Crianlarich Anderson eventually agreed, and goods workings commenced in 1897^[36]. Of passenger traffic exchange there was no mention.

As Chapter 3 has shown, Thompson had warned that the North British Company would not willingly transfer fish or livestock, southbound from Fort William, to the Callander & Oban at Crianlarich. The West Highland promoters were either deceitful or themselves deceived. And suspicion grew that Thompson was right. Place's property was a relatively tiny island in the vast Breadalbane estates. Claiming that he had compromised with the West Highland interest in 1889 for the sake of his tenants, Breadalbane now demanded a reckoning.

The supposed difficulties with the proprietor at Crianlarich (are) settled ... From the excuses put forward by the ... Company, it looks as is they have no intention of opening the junction until they

are compelled . . . The promoters of the West Highland line ... have misled Parliament and the public. (All) cattle, sheep and heavy goods for ... Dundee, Perth, Stirling and the north must go round by Glasgow. Possibly the real motive ... is that it is more profitable to themselves to carry ... via Glasgow, over the North British ... system^[37].

In 1893 the North British Company had decided to back the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway (better known as the West Highland Mallaig Extension), and thereafter Breadalbane and others had a weapon. In 1895 the town councils of Perth and Stirling voted to petition the Treasury that the Mallaig scheme should not be subsidised until all the promises of 1888-9 were fulfilled. (The fishermen at Portincaple made a similar threat.)^[38] The Mallaig promotion and the Treasury Guarantee for Mallaig are discussed in Chapters 5-7. Breadalbane continued to urge that assistance for the Mallaig Extension be given on strict conditions - to include an undertaking that livestock from West Highland stations could be consigned via Callander^[39].

Breadalbane had other grievances. His shooting tenant in Glen Falloch reported that the railway surfacemen and their families disturbed game and polluted streams. Telegrams were reluctantly accepted, with surcharge; at Tyndrum, there had been no reply to requests that the West Highland wire at Bridge of Orchy be made available to the public. The Callander & Oban Company, said the Marquess, had always offered these facilities. The West Highland had lost a legal battle over water rights but tried to smuggle the necessary powers into subsequent legislation. For all this, Breadalbane blamed Wieland. But he warned to Conacher, who found some remedies. The surfacemen's cottages were resited on Colquhoun land. A large hut at Bridge of Orchy, which Breadalbane had purchased from Lucas & Aird only to see it demolished (maliciously, said Breadalbane), was thoroughly repaired. Another hut, at Gortan, was offered to the Glen Orchy school board^[40]. The hoteliers at Dalmally, Inveroran and Kingshouse, all Breadalbane tenants, proposed to run coaches, connecting with West Highland trains^[41]. On Fraser of Dalmally, a substantial local figure (and promoter of the Glen Falloch Railway in 1887-8), the Marquess made no comment; but Forbes at Inveroran and Buchanan at Kingshouse, he advised Conacher, should be held to a contract. If they were to have "some advantage over outsiders", they must provide a "good team" and a "well-appointed" coach^[42].

Breadalbane had plans of his own for Bridge of Orchy. The West Highland would attract more droves besides intercepting the established 'walks'. Converting the huts sold off by the contractors would provide a house for the drove-stance keeper, and also a shop, a refreshment room and stables^[43]. If Forbes obtained the lease - in the end Breadalbane decided otherwise, he would be required to accommodate all

horse-and-carriage traffic to Conacher's satisfaction^[44]. A spirit license was "not desirable" Conacher indicated tactfully that Crianlarich was the preferred "refreshment station", though Arrochar & Tarbet, Bridge of Orchy and Inverlair (Tulloch), where coaches would meet the trains, all had some claim^[45]. By refusing water at Bridge of Orchy, Breadalbane lost his customers. Once Place was satisfied, Crianlarich became the principal intermediate servicing point. The combined saloon-and-compartment vehicles built for the West Highland were well-equipped by then standards, but the 120 miles Glasgow - Fort William journey stretched to five hours. Crianlarich was a convenient half-way house, providing brisk sit-down meals and food-baskets^[46].

Breadalbane's correspondence is valuable. His loyalties lay with the Highland Company and with the Callander & Oban and Caledonian, but he played the paternalist landlord, whose duty it was to accept the West Highland scheme (with due compensation for himself) and to call the West Highland to account over broken promises. He also liked to play the knowledgeable railway director, instructing the North British on the constraints and opportunities of the Highlands. In this role, Breadalbane reminded Conacher, who probably agreed but could not say so, how Forman and Walker had exaggerated the West Highland's prospects^[47]. Wieland on his own admission used delaying tactics and evasion^[48]. Conacher found it better to be direct and urbane. One way or another, Breadalbane could not be ignored. In the early 1880s, before the Glasgow & North Western promotion, he had been invited to join the North British board, which suggested that Walker was already looking north from Loch Lomond^[49]. As a great land-owner ambivalent about the West Highland promotion, Breadalbane can be compared with Sir James Colquhoun, an indulgent but silent supporter, and with Lochiel, actively committed from the outset.

In Glen Falloch, Strathfillan and Glen Orchy the North British Railway, working the West Highland, competed for local traffic with the Caledonian. For example, rates for coal from Lanarkshire were equalised and therefore reduced, though the Caledonian resisted, since the West Highland route was shorter than the Callander & Oban^[50]. North from Glen Orchy the West Highland route offered new railheads to a large area of Perthshire, previously served in part by the Callander & Oban via Killin and otherwise by the Highland Company's main line and Aberfeldy branch. John Scott, factor for the Bullough estate in Glen Lyon, was ready to testify in favour of the West Highland.

There is a pass ... to Auch ... a little south of Bridge of Orchy. (If) the road were put in a proper condition ... a good horse would easily bring a ton of coals from Auch .., whereas ... we cannot cart more than about 16 cwts from Aberfeldy ... or more than 10 cwts from Killin. The road ... to Killin ... is generally blocked all the winter and the Road Trustees are not bound to keep it open ... The steamers on Loch Tay cannot take ... wool, lime or coals, and this class of goods has to be conveyed in barges towed by the steamers. (Coals) cost at Aberfeldy 21/- a ton,.. the same ... coals being sold at Tyndrum for 14/-.

The West Highland line, said Scott, would give farmers easy access to wintering ground in Dunbartonshire. Wintering in Rhum, via Roshven, was another possibility. ("Mr.Bullough would send ... his hogs ... He has already made an experiment in this direction and finds the death rate very low.") Meggernie's tenant farmers would accept higher rents if they had the assurance of supplies via Auch^[51].

George Gow, hotelier at Dunalister, claimed that the population of Strathummel and Loch Rannoch likewise hoped to benefit from the West Highland Railway.

The old road from Struan ... is extraordinarily hilly and no horse can take more than about 13 cwts. The new road (has) a heavy toll. The nearest (point) on the West Highland line would be about 2 miles further from Kinlochranoch than Struan is, but I should certainly prefer to send my carts to the West Highland (and) the advantages to all the lodges and crofting townships and farms which lie West.. would be... greater.. I get a great deal of my furnishings and groceries from Glasgow.. . From Struan to Glasgow is 103 miles while (on) the West Highland... the distance would only be 86 miles^[52].

Duncan MacDiarmid, farmer at Camusericht, declared that he 'walked' sheep to Killin or Crieff rather than use the Highland Railway at Struan or Aberfeldy. As a cattle dealer ("I have an average of 1,000 to 1,200 head ... through my hands in the year."), he preferred 'walking' to Falkirk. The West Highland would truck livestock directly to Glasgow. To Falkirk, via Callander or via Glasgow, he expected the benefit of equalised rates. The new line would carry wool, winter feed, smearing and dipping materials and domestic coal. ("I have to pay at least 45/- a ton for superior Scotch coal at my house, and ... we should get it a good deal under £1 a ton.") Coal would replace peat, but the excellent peats along the river Gaur could be sent to MacDonald's distilleries in Fort William, with a return traffic in draff purchased by the Rannoch farmers. MacDiarmid had another sheep farm on Loch Awe. For wintering in Moray and Aberdeen, he would truck the sheep via Crianlarich to Inverlair (Tulloch), drive them to Newtonmore and truck them again^[53].

Save for MacDiarmid's figures on sheep traffic (and his dubious testimony as to conditions on Rannoch

Moor, noted in Chapter 3), little of this material was deployed in Parliament in 1889, perhaps because competition with the Highland Railway had to be played down, persuading the Highland towards the Ten Years Truce. It is quoted here to illustrate how N.B.Mackenzie orchestrated all the evidence of prospective traffic on the West Highland north of Crianlarich. There is some suggestion of making bricks with very little straw (wintering sheep in Rhum, wagon loads of distillery peats), but the job was skilfully done. MacDiarmid was primed to say that he expected the Callander & Oban Company to obstruct the exchange of livestock traffic at Crianlarich^[54].

The road from Bridge of Balgie to Auch was not improved - and 'road' was always a generous description. Glen Lyon brought the West Highland only occasional sheep traffic. Breadalbane alleged that Forman had misled the tenants at Auch and Achallader, who hoped to have their own sidings and the right to stop passenger trains^[55]. But this surely related, at least at Auch, to expectations of increasing contact with Glen Lyon. (The Callander & Oban allowed calls at isolated houses in section, and the Highland Railway long defied the Board of Trade by running mixed trains without continuous brakes. In that light, Forman was not so irresponsible.) Rannoch station was sited below Cruach hill, whence an ancient path ran west to Glen Coe and east to Kinlochrannoch. The West Highland Company built a new road eastward, only to clash with Sir Robert Menzies, who tried to restrict its use^[56]. In 1888-9 Menzies was an emphatic supporter, not least in respect of sporting traffic and the let of his own shooting lodge^[57]. The wrangle over the Rannoch road, like The MacKintosh's threat of legal action if 'Inverlair' did not become 'Tulloch', is a reminder how precarious was the unity of landlords on which the West Highland promoters had so much depended.

The sale of Corrour forest to Sir John Stirling-Maxwell removed Colonel Walker's opposition to the West Highland Railway and allowed Forman to amend his survey across the northern margin of Rannoch Moor, making the line become the boundary between the two proprietors^[58]. Menzies's land was no longer severed and the deviation touched a detached portion of Lochiel's estates. (Lochiel parted with a parcel of land to round off Stirling-Maxwell's Corrour.) In return for the deviation, Colonel Walker was ready to give land, waive his claim for disturbance and contribute to the cost of deer fences along the railway. The West Highland Company met his legal expenses^[59]. All this strongly suggests that Colonel Walker's original resistance was tactical. Forman told a sceptical Committee that the new layout followed

firmer ground^[60]. As Chapter 3 has explained, the Appin Trustees were not reconciled, and the perception that the Company had bought off one landowner at the expense of another, while gratifying a director (Lochiel) and an ally (Menzies), meant the loss of 'Deviation No.1' from the West Highland Bill of 1889-90. Colonel Walker had already been promised "facilities" for old Corroul lodge, which lay east of Cruach^[61]. Did the promise transfer to Stirling-Maxwell, who was to build his new house by Loch Ossian? The long section between Bridge of Orchy and Rannoch Station was divided at Gortan passing place; the section forward to Inverlair (Tulloch), also long and lonely, had a passing place at Lebruarichd: both names were borrowed from shepherds' cottages. "Lebruarichd", near Loch Ossian, became "Corroul" in deference to Stirling-Maxwell, who in 1893 entered into a formal agreement for a siding and basic platform. He gave Lucas & Aird free use of the sand and gravel which outcropped among the Rannoch bogs^[62]. Conacher was unaware, or chose not to know, of any earlier understanding among Walker, Stirling-Maxwell and factor George Malcolm.

At Corroul, as elsewhere on the West Highland, much remained to be done when the line was hastily opened in the summer of 1894. That the railway fences had no gates was an additional irritation. Stirling-Maxwell complained that his ponies had to make a long detour to cross the railway. Until the siding was ready (April, 1895), building materials were unloaded by the lineside and other goods delivered to Rannoch or to Inverlair - the one inconvenient, the other useless. Several wagons of young trees were worked to Fort William in error and left in the goods yard there. Stirling-Maxwell had to employ a mail runner for the twenty-mile round trip to Rannoch^[63]. Obligated to cancel building contracts, Malcolm complained to Conacher.

(Sir) John afforded every facility and refrained from exactations which he might have made. He has been poorly rewarded .., while other proprietors with whom the Company has had many difficulties have received ... concessions in inverse ratio to their amiability ..^[64]

This was a hit at The MacKintosh and possibly at Breadalbane. And it indicated Malcolm's growing disenchantment with the North British Company.

There was a protracted (and sometimes ludicrous) conflict over the terms on which trains called at Corroul. In the general election of 1895 Stirling-Maxwell became a Unionist M.P., and Conacher conceded that he might halt any train, as parliamentary business dictated. Other passengers were required to seek authorisation from the North British Company's District Superintendent in Fort William^[65]. As with

Whistlefield, Conacher temporised by shifting responsibility to the Board of Trade. A private station, used only by the landowner, his guests, his tenants and his employees, escaped regulation in detail; if there was ambiguity as to 'public' or 'private' status, the Board could demand additional expenditure^[66]. There are hints that Conacher wanted not so much to avoid a relatively small outlay but to bring the Board of Trade back into discussions, with Corroul as a test case, whereby construction and operation of intermediate stations could be simplified^[67]. The North British Company had already attempted to obtain concessions for the West Highland Mallaig Extension, as Chapter 7 will show.

In the meantime the North British Company inflexibly applied 'next station' charges. Goods traffic was booked to Corroul siding; passengers were booked to or from the next station (Rannoch or Tulloch), and the extra mileage accrued to the West Highland^[68]. This penalised the workforce, sometimes 200 strong, who were erecting new Corroul house and other buildings on the estate. They made return journeys to Glasgow or Fort William every pay-fortnight. Conacher allowed the contractors to allocate special weekend tickets^[69]. Eventually Malcolm forced the issue. Returning from Corroul to Invergarry in May, he tendered what he calculated to be the first class fare from Corroul to Spean Bridge, refusing to pay from Rannoch. When this was declined he purchased a Tulloch - Spean Bridge ticket and resisted all demands for the balance. The North British Company's legal department advised Conacher to admit defeat^[70]. At the end of 1895, Stirling-Maxwell had sought definitive intervention by the Board of Trade, at the same time threatening to claim for the sand and gravel taken by the West Highland Company^[71]. Corroul became a public station, though few trains were scheduled to call. Special arrangements for Stirling-Maxwell were appended to the timetables. (Beasdale, on the Mallaig Extension, would be likewise minimally 'public', with arrangements for Nicholson of Arisaig.)^[72] The Board of Trade judged the little island platform to be adequate, though longer trains had to pull up twice^[73].

The estate continued to depend on the West Highland.

Sir John, during the shooting season, makes full use of the express trains ... for himself and his guests, and gives us good notice ... (We) have done more for Sir John's people ... than for any other party, (since) meal, grain etc. are put off specially (and) the Company has allowed the post office and the telegraph into the signalman's place at Corroul with the sole object of facilitating Sir John ..^[74]

Malcolm pressed for and eventually obtained a brake van travelling pass ("I must get from Corroul

Lodge to Corrour Station before dark, (which) involves a long wait, (and) occasionally a special goods ... passes ... by which I might get to Spean Bridge ... earlier ... '')[75]

Having chosen the Rannoch-and-Spean route, the West Highland promoters were bound to emphasise the traffic potential of Brae (or northern) Lochaber and of the Great Glen south of Fort Augustus, while insisting that Nether (or southern) Lochaber could be served just as well via Fort William. Drovers from Skye, Kintail and Glen Moriston would concentrate at Spean Bridge, adding to a large local traffic^[76]. Distiller D.P. MacDonald, as tenant of Claggan and Keppoch, shed some 2,000 sheep every year. Other farmers shed a like proportion of their flocks, besides sending sheep to winter^[77]. Sheltered Glen Roy and Abinger's own home farm raised sturdy cattle^[78]; with rail transport it would be possible to improve the strain and fatten additional stock for the southern market.

Very much more might be done in the West Highlands in the way of rearing and summering cattle ... A Railway would enable farmers who had plenty of good summer grass to buy in 2-year old cattle in spring and sell (in) October. (More) extensive feeding of cattle would improve the pasture which has a tendency to deteriorate while ... stocked of nothing but sheep^[79].

MacDonald gave details of the game taken each season. A limited number of venison haunches, grouse and salmon went by the coach which ran during the tourist months between Fort William and Kingussie; much more would go by train^[80]. Archibald MacFarlane, Spean Bridge storekeeper and general dealer, endorsed MacDonald's figures. He added that, relying on water-carriage via Gairloch or Fort William, he could give only the lowest price for eggs. Crofters would find a steady market for eggs, poultry and potatoes once the railway came. He himself would be able to obtain goods 'same day' from Glasgow. He spoke hopefully of local granite workings and of the high quality building lime which could be obtained from Abinger's kiln at Torlundy; here was return traffic to balance domestic coal carried north^[81].

The MacKintosh testified that Brae Lochaber was populous by Highland standards, with two club farms and a crofting township besides larger farms. The district supported a full Company of Volunteers. He implied that conditions were stable, labour in demand and wages fair^[82]. Abinger said that he gave higher wages at Inverlochty than he paid on his Surrey estate^[83]. Depopulation was a delicate topic, apt to disrupt any understanding between the West Highland promoters and the Crofter-Liberal M.P.s. If loss

of population weakened the area between Lochaber and the west coast, distress in the Islands was attributable to underemployment and overpopulation. In both cases the new railway would be a remedy. Lochaber already had the foundations of prosperity; there the railway would bring renewed economic growth. This composite picture survived parliamentary examination, despite opposition complaints that the crofting population along, or within reach of, the West Highland route had not been rigorously counted^[84]. It was a picture broadly in accord with the promoters' claim that a railway to Fort William would justify itself and repay the North British Company, while extension to the coast might merit state assistance. The prospectus remained plausibly coherent, and there are further hints of MacKenzie's drafting and editing, prior to the final selection of parliamentary witnesses.

Once again, competition with the Highland Railway was down played. Ewen Cameron, hotelier at Loch Laggan, complained that Hamilton coal at Newtonmore, with penalties for demurrage when he could not cart the coal at once, cost more than double what he expected to pay at Inverlair. But he also held that the coach journey of thirty miles between Inverlair and Kingussie would be the ideal summer drive - to travel all the way from Fort William was tedious. Circular tours would increase^[85]. In Parliament the West Highland case stressed the summer traffic which the Highland Company would win, not the coal and general traffic which the West Highland would capture. The promoters were not afraid to take what they saw as their own. Lochiel asserted that, as the largest "sheep proprietor" in Scotland, he felt no obligation to 'walk' thirty-to-fifty miles to Dalwhinnie for the benefit of the Highland Company's shareholders, to whose dividends Dalwhinnie made a modest contribution; it was a large matter for Lochaber farmers and their landlords^[86]. He could not deny that the droves which took the Correyairack Pass to Dalwhinnie would be diverted to Spean Bridge. Abinger claimed that cattle and sheep in some numbers, both from Brae Lochaber and from the North West, were 'walked' south by Lochtreighead: these must belong to the West Highland^[87].

The promoters had to take account of the feeling that an eventual Laggan branch connecting with the Highland Company's main line was perhaps preferable to extension of the West Highland route through the Great Glen to Inverness.

(Store) cattle (are) largely reared both in Argyllshire and Western Inverness-shire, .. readily bought by the feeders in ... Banff, Elgin, Moray and Aberdeen. Young sheep will continue to be sent ... to these Counties, to be wintered. (To) connect the West Highland Railway ... with the North East Coast Railway systems ... would be of great benefit to the country, and will, when the Aviemore line

(reaches) Inverness, give ... rapid ... communication not only between West Inverness-shire and Inverness but also between West Inverness-shire and all the North Eastern Counties^[88].

These sentiments belong to 1895, when opinion was divided between the Laggan link and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus scheme. But they date back to the promotion of the West Highland Railway in 1888-9. Farmers in the Ardgour, Moidart and Ardnamurchan, disappointed of a 'direct' railway south from Corran Ferry, nevertheless hoped for a new service north from Fort William into Strathspey^[89]. And Duncan MacDiarmid (Above) promised to send his wintering stock north by Inverlair. If such considerations did not shape the decision to go by Rannoch and Glen Spean, they certainly served to justify it after the event. They help to explain why the Ten Years Truce did not rule out a Laggan line, as discussed in Chapter 3. The line might have been presented as the 'optimum' addition to the West Highland Railway and the Highland Company might have accepted it, on a joint basis, if this prevented any further assault on Inverness via the Great Glen.

A through service to the North East could be achieved not only over the Highland Railway via Forres but also by the Great North of Scotland Company's Strathspey branch. Forman's dealings with the Great North are treated briefly in Chapter 8. Another complication was the attitude of Sir John Ramsden of Ardverickie. He was neutral to the West Highland promotion and subsequently supported the West Highland Mallaig Extension; but, wary about his own amenity on Loch Laggan, he suggested that any link with the Highland Railway should be diverted by Glen Roy to the foot of the Correyairack^[90]. That The MacKintosh was the key landowner on the Laggan route partly explains why he was generously treated in respect of the Glen Spean deviation, receiving £1,000 additional compensation, and allowed his "Tulloch" station^[91]. Lochiel recognised, as did Wieland and MacKenzie, that The MacKintosh must be placated against the day when the West Highland Company might be obliged to promote the Laggan line^[92].

Abinger recalled how Fort William's development from the 1840s to the 1870s had been determined by successive improvements in transport.

I remember ... coming down to Inverlochy with my father ... We went by railway to Liverpool thence by steamer to Glasgow and then posted. (Afterwards) quick steamers were put on twice a week (to) Banavie. From Banavie the passengers went into the old luggage boats through the Caledonian Canal ... (Later) boats ran daily during the summer ... till the Highland Railway was

made ... The Fort William passenger traffic for the South then went to Kingussie ... by ... coach. Since the Railway was made to Oban the Fort William traffic goes South that way ...^[93]

Construction of the Caledonian Canal had established Fort William as a banking centre and market town, with an increasing number of summer visitors. This had been confirmed when David MacBrayne took over and expanded the Hutchison Company's steamer services on the west coast. Banker Ewen Cameron, merchant Donald Boyd and others of the 'town party' argued that completion of the Callander & Oban Railway in 1880, when MacBrayne's sailings were recast to fit the Oban trains, had done more harm than good to Fort William and Lochaber. The town was a natural cross-roads and must recover its rightful place^[94]. Moreover, any new railway to the seaboard north of Ardnamurchan but south of Strome Ferry, as contemplated in the Napier Report, must first reach Fort William^[95]. As Abinger put it, the Caledonian Company had robbed the Highland by redirecting Kingussie traffic to the Callander & Oban route. Why should the West Highland, with North British support, not now rob the Caledonian?^[96] It was, in any case, recapture and not robbery. For the 'town party', a branch from Connel Ferry would be very much second-best; they wanted a 'direct' link with Glasgow, which would not increase their subordination to Oban. Attacks on upstart Oban were part of MacKenzie's campaign.

To the west of Lochaber is a townlet, which ... takes ... a condescending interest in the desires of our district. (It) endeavours to silence our legitimate aspirations. It refers, with questionable taste, to our 'bleak and barren' regions, and tauntingly asks what ... inducements we are able to offer. (This) 'creation of a day', this 'modern gourd', .. has come into existence by favours of certain steamboat companies, (and is) posing as the adviser of the old capital of Lochaber, and deigning to say what ... its privileges shall be^[97].

The 1870s had seen £100,000 spent on private residences and hotels within the burgh. All agreed that the 1880s were, by comparison, "sluggish", discouraging the Burgh Commissioners, who had hitherto made good use of the adoptive powers conveyed by the Police Acts. By 1896, two years after the opening of the West Highland Railway, the town was making "rapid strides". Gross rental had increased from £7,370 (1893-4) to £9,950 (1896-7). Building was "extending up the hillside". A plentiful water supply was being planned, to serve the feuing ground opened up by the proprietors, Lochiel and Mrs. Cameron-Campbell. The Fort William Electric Lighting Company, in which MacKenzie took a leading part, was constructing a hydro-electric plant on the river Kiachnish, south of the town, to the pioneering designs of Frederick Yorke. Another company had been formed to build a sixty-bedroom "Station Hotel" on a commanding site above the pierhead. (The hotel, subsequently the "Highland Hotel", had no ties with the West Highland Railway or the North British.)^[98]

Some hopes went unfulfilled. The small local activity in weaving and dyeing continued to decline. ('For Sale, a large building suitable for a woollen factory or other manufacture, situated in the Low Street,.. adjoining the (railway) line ... to which it may be connected by a siding. Upset price, £3,000.. .')^[99] Local fishing in Loch Linnhe and Loch Eil, though talked up when the West Highland was before Parliament, had become insignificant^[100]. Other developments encouraged by the new railway included a third distillery (independent of D.P.MacDonald), for which a siding was laid in^[101], and an up-to-date slaughter house^[102]. Cattle dealer Angus Cameron established an auction mart. When the new Lord Abinger refused a site at Lochy Bridge, Cameron was accommodated at Nevis Bridge, on the northern boundary of the burgh, within reach of the goods yard, where livestock traffic soon needed an additional loading bank and sidings^[103]. D.P.MacDonald's local movements - distillery to distillery, to and from the piers and to and from Banavie, amounted to several hundred tons in the average week, besides his regular traffic with the South^[104]. (MacDonald no longer needed his own steamer, which carried draff to Ireland and brought back Ayrshire coals.) There was a ready market for domestic coal in Fort William and the surrounding countryside; for the best peat had been worked out^[105]. The West Highland competed with the coastal lighters. Several general merchants and carters expanded their coal deliveries, operating out of Fort William goods yard; tacit concessions on demurrage, by this date the general practice, encouraged traffic in coal and other bulky consignments^[106].

The Banavie branch encouraged tourists on the steamer route between Oban and Inverness to pause in Fort William, benefitting hoteliers and shopkeepers. (The short train trip superseded MacBrayne's horse-omnibus between Corpach and Banavie, where the Canal steamers terminated.) The branch also connected with the winter steamer which left for Inverness early in the morning. Those with business in the county town had no alternative, unless they posted to the Highland Railway at Newtonmore or Kingussie. It had been usual, though inconvenient, to sleep at Banavie, rather than drive there in a winter dawn^[107]. From 1895 Banavie was briefly the railhead for the West (and, in some measure, for the Great Glen), in competition with MacBrayne's passenger and cargo service between Glasgow and Corpach. West Highland trains ran through to Banavie, reversing in Fort William, as all trains between Glasgow and Mallaig would later do^[108]. The first mile of the branch became the first mile of the Mallaig Extension. A new "Banavie" station was provided, while the original became 'Banavie Pier'. When distillery traffic on the Canal fell away, the remaining half-mile saw little but summer tourists. Nevertheless the branch is a reminder that the West Highland Railway had some very local customers. The Conaglen crofters who

ferried Loch Eil and took the train at Banavie every other month, to shop in Fort William, are a case in point^[109]. With a lean timetable, these occasional visits, via Banavie or from the 'main line' stations in Glen Spean, often meant an overnight stay^[110]. The West Highland thus helped to recapture, or recreate, Fort William's 'market town' status, as the promoters had promised. Whether this was the sort of traffic on which a railway could live, is another question - and within thirty years it had passed to the motor bus and the motor lorry.

The West Highland Company claimed that Ballachulish, Nether Lochaber and the Ardgour, though denied a 'direct' route by Glen Coe, would look to Fort William as their railhead. The Company acknowledged a special obligation, in co-operation with government, to continue the West Highland to the Atlantic coast. A feeder line from Ballachulish to Fort William, along with a Great Glen feeder line to Spean Bridge and a Laggan link line, would be considered as traffic increased^[111]. Residential development both north and south of Fort William - in Glen Spean, along Loch Lochy and along Loch Linnhe, would hasten these promotions. Onich bay, south facing and positioned between the important ferries at Ballachulish and Corran, ought to be attractive: Lochiel, as landlord, had already built a new pier^[112]. The real message in all this was that the North British Company intended to have the widest possible catchment, centred on Fort William. Connection with the other lines already established in the Highlands might reduce rather than concentrate the available traffic. This was the very argument, now turned to the defence of West Highland preserves, which the Highland Company and the Caledonian had used against the West Highland. North British attitudes are discussed more fully in Chapter 8.

In practice, the districts between Fort William and Oban, including the scattered communities of Ardgour and Morvern, continued to rely on water transport. MacBrayne's steamers now connected both with North British trains at Fort William and with Caledonian trains at Oban. But on the whole the pattern favoured Oban. During the winter there was no steamer connection into the afternoon West Highland departure for the South^[113]. In 1889 the promoters had argued that MacBrayne served both shores of Linnhe and Lorne as no railway could. But this was contrived, both to combat the Caledonian's last-minute offer of a Connel Ferry - Fort William branch and to justify taking the West Highland by Rannoch. William Arnott, the North British Company's first District Superintendent at Fort William, was eager to have the West Highland advance to Ballachulish, containing the Caledonian and winning new traffic^[114]. Tweeddale and Conacher were content, by 1896-7, to draw a boundary between Callander

& Oban territory south of Loch Leven and West Highland territory to the north.

Arnott's submission no doubt reflected some desire to enlarge his own empire.

(The) Quarries (produce) about 19,000 tons per annum and is (sic) capable of much more. The main market is Glasgow ... The import of coal ... is about 2,000 tons. Miscellaneous goods ... runs between five and six hundred tons ... (The) slates are sent to shipping ports (but) a large proportion ... will ultimately be sent inland and ... might be sent by (rail). (The) great tourist traffic to Glencoe and Staffa and Iona could be very much better wrought from Ballachulish) than at present from Oban^[115].

It also recalls the Glasgow & North Western prospectus of 1882-3, outlined in Chapter 2, with Ballachulish as concentration point for slate, fish and general traffic. And it contrasts with the West Highland presentation of 1888-9, when Ballachulish was largely dismissed. Corran Ferry had been another Glasgow & North Western concentration point, for all the livestock west to Ardnamurchan: and much of the old evidence would re-appear in support of the West Highland Ballachulish line promoted in 1895-6. But Conacher's first concern was to block the Callander & Oban route to Fort William, as Chapter 8 explains. Traffic estimates of this kind could always be mustered at need, and they were always subordinate to strategic calculation. Powers to build south from Fort William, once obtained, were kept in reserve to hold the Caledonian at Loch Leven.

Scheduled to the West Highland Railway's Ballachulish Act of 1896 was an agreement resolving a long quarrel between the Company and the burgh of Fort William. The line authorised in 1889 ('Railway No.2') entered the town uncontroversially, through the grazings of Abinger's tenants along the river Lochy. A tidal causeway led to the old fort, which Mrs. Cameron-Campbell offered as all-purpose depot^[116]. When her late husband, Campbell of Monzie, purchased the fort from the War Office in the 1860s, supporters of Hope-Scott's proposed line from Newtonmore obtained a promise that the site would be made available for any future scheme^[117]. Forman's plans continued to the pierhead ('Railway No.6' of 1889); the Burgh Commissioners understood that they were to have a sea-wall esplanade, with unobtrusive tramway^[118]. Re-aligned to serve MacDonald's distilleries ('Deviation No.3' of 1890), the line invaded the grounds of the Belford Hospital and cut the Craigs cemetery: the short extension of the foreshore section to reach MacDonald's pier ('New Railway No.4' of 1890) threatened to obstruct the town pier^[120]. Pro-railway and anti-railway factions now divided the 'town party' of 1887-8. The conflict deepened when, in 1893, it became known that the passenger station would be built at the pierhead. The 'main line' now occupied the sea-wall. All hope of an esplanade vanished^[120].

The Commissioners appealed to the Board of Trade, whose Inspector achieved an armistice for rail services to begin in 1894^[121]. Thereafter, like the disgruntled Loch Long fishermen and those who wanted full exchange of traffic at Crianlarich, the opposition faction talked of challenging the Treasury's Mallaig Guarantee^[122]. Town clerk Donald Fraser accused MacKenzie of concealing a conflict of interest, in that he had become agent for the West Highland Company while still Provost^[123]. MacKenzie's enemies, reported Arnott, were encouraged by the local solicitor who acted for the Caledonian Railway^[124]. Town and railway continued to squabble over the station refreshment room, which was denied a licence, and over temporary houses on railway property, which breached Dean-of-Guild regulations. It was alleged that no adequate provision had been made for the families displaced from the old fort^[125].

The West Highland Company could retort that their sea-wall reclaimed much of the shore to the town's advantage. The fort could not contain passenger, goods and locomotive facilities. Moreover, the town had invited Waldron-Smith to take the Glasgow & North Western Railway by the seaside^[126]. The agreement scheduled to the West Highland Ballachulish Bill in 1896 gave a right-of-way along the sea-wall, with access to boat slips; on the landward side a new road was laid out, replacing the old "Low Street": The Ballachulish line (never to be built) would leave the town on a viaduct, preserving the shingle beach for fishermen and bathers; severed land would become a public garden^[127]. All this went some way to answer the charge that the West Highland had been "built on broken promises". But unease remained that behind "our" West Highland Company stood the high-handed North British. Lochiel complained that the Ballachulish promotion was governed entirely by the manoeuvres of Caledonian and North British with scant regard for local wishes, his interest as landlord, or the needs of his crofting tenants^[129]. Conacher was ready to abandon "Banavie Pier" for the less convenient "Banavie" on the Mallaig Extension^[130]. From the Gareloch to Lochaber, enthusiasm for the new route was soon tinged with disappointment and foreboding.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 4

- ¹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
West Highland Railway Bill 1888-9, Clause 29
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/loose
Correspondence re siting of stations, January - May, 1892
- ² SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
J.C. Reid, manager of Shandon Hydropathic, to MacRae, Flett & Rennie, agents for the West Highland Railway, 29 June 1894
David Deuchars, Superintendent of the Line, North British Railway, to John Conacher, General Manager, North British Railway, 6 July 1894
- ³ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
J Morrison, Chairman of the Shandon Hydropathic Company to Conacher, 3 July 1894
- ⁴ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Reid to MacRae, Flett & Rennie, 29 June 1894
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Conacher, 30 June 1894
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Morrison to Conacher, 3 July 1894
- ⁵ J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, pages 70-1
- ⁶ SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division
- ⁷ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
“Petition for Railway Siding at Craggan”, January 1894
- ⁸ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
Deuchars to Conacher, 22 December 1894
See also D. MacDougall, Goods Manager, North British Railway, to Conacher, 24 September and 11 December 1894 and 1 April and 28 May 1895
- ⁹ SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division
- ¹⁰ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Luss Trustees to MacRae, Flett & Rennie, 17 April 1894
- ¹¹ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
D. Munro, Whistlefield Inn, to the directors of the West Highland Railway, 16 April 1894
See also request from “Feuars and Householders” for an interview with Conacher, 26 August 1895
- ¹² SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to George Wieland, Secretary of the West Highland Railway, 19 July 1894
- ¹³ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Wieland to Conacher, 10 August 1895
- ¹⁴ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Deuchars to Conacher, 7 February and 11 March 1895
J. Carswell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 7 October 1895 and 13 February and 19 March 1896
- ¹⁵ SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division

- 16 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
MacDougall to Conacher, 15 November 1894
“Feuars and Householders” to Conacher, 26 August 1895
- 17 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
MacDougall to Conacher, 15 November 1894
- 18 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
John MacLean, fishermen’s spokesman, Portincaple, to Conacher, February 1896
- 19 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
MacLean to Conacher, 19 February 1896
W. Cunningham, District Superintendent, Glasgow, North British Railway, to Conacher, 28 February 1896
Cunningham’s report was prepared in consultation with MacLean, Munro and other representatives of the Loch Long community.
- 20 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Cunningham to Conacher, 28 February 1896
- 21 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
MacLean to Conacher, 24 March 1896
Railway Department, Board of Trade, to Conacher, 30 April 1896
Conacher to Wieland 6 May 1896
Wieland to Conacher 8 May 1896
- 22 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
John MacKenzie, farmer, Coulport, to Cunningham, 7 February 1896
- 23 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
J.M. Taylor to Conacher, 27 July, 2 October and 14 November 1893
- 24 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Conacher, Memorandum, 9 October 1893
- 25 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Campbell Douglas to Conacher, 25 October 1893
J Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 1, Chapter 9
- 26 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Conacher to Douglas, 27 October 1893
Conacher to Mrs. G. Marryat of Finnart, 13 July 1894
Conacher to Watt, Hayes & Co., solicitors for Munro, (Whistlefield Inn) 21 February 1896
- 27 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Taylor to Conacher, 21 and 28 October 1896
- 28 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
There was a long correspondence on rail-and-steamer fares, from November 1893 to June 1894.
- 29 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
James Henderson, Carrick Castle, to Conacher, 19 April 1899
- 30 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
John Anderson, Secretary of the Callander & Oban Railway, to Charles Forman, Engineer of the West Highland Railway, 11 June 1892
Wieland to Conacher, 27 October 1892
Forman to Conacher, 24 December 1892

- 31 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
James Thompson, General Manager of the Caledonian Railway, to Conacher, offering to share the cost of a joint station, 8 April 1893
Estimates by Forman and by the Caledonian Company, with ensuing correspondence, April-July, 1893
Conacher to Wieland, confirming that no agreement could be reached, 12 July 1893
SRO/BR/RHP 27690
Connecting spurs at Crianlarich and Tyndrum
- 32 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Conacher, Memorandum, 3 July 1893
Conacher to Thompson, 5 July 1893
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/40
North British Railway Minutes, 20 July 1893
- 33 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
J MacLaren, Superintendent of the Line, North British Railway, to Conacher, 29 May 1893
- 34 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Award by Sir Douglas Galton, Board of Trade arbiter, 7 November 1893
Forman to Wieland, advising that the Crianlarich spur was ready for inspection, 24 October 1894
Thompson to Conacher, urging previous proposals for a joint station, 12 June 1895
Conacher to J. Parker-Smith M.P., director of the North British Railway, detailing Place's resistance, 21 August 1895
See also West Highland Railway v. Place Session Cases 108 1893-4
- 35 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Deuchars to Conacher, 20 January 1897
- 36 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Deuchars to Conacher, 11 June 1895
William Arnott, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to Deuchars, 11 February 1897
- 37 Marquess of Breadalbane, The Scotsman, 19 September 1896
- 38 Glasgow Herald, 18 September 1895
Stirling Journal & Advertiser, 20 September 1895
See also John MacLean, Portincaple, to Conacher, February 1896 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
- 39 Breadalbane, The Scotsman, 19 September 1896
- 40 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Breadalbane to the Marquess of Tweeddale, Chairman of the North British Railway, 19 February 1895
Breadalbane to Conacher, 7, 10 and 31 August, 16, 22 and 30 September, and 7 and 21 October 1895, for all these (and other) issues.
See also Breadalbane to Conacher, 26 October and 19 November 1895; and Davidson & Syme (Breadalbane's solicitors) to Conacher, 12 December 1895 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
For the dispute over water at Bridge of Orchy, see West Highland Railway v. Breadalbane Session Cases 66 1894-5
- 41 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Breadalbane to Conacher, 23 October 1893
- 42 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Breadalbane to Conacher, 14 December 1893
- 43 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Breadalbane to Conacher, 23 October and 14 December 1893
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Breadalbane to Conacher, 22 September 1895
- 44 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Breadalbane to Conacher, 14 December 1893

- 45 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Conacher to Breadalbane, 26 October 1893
- 46 C. Hamilton-Ellis, The North British Railway, page 154
- 47 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Breadalbane to Conacher, 21 October 1895
- 48 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Wieland to Conacher, 9 September 1896
See also MacDougall to Conacher 11 September 1896, indicating that Wieland's efforts to "put off" Breadalbane in the matter of timber to be sent from Blackmount to Killin had been less than successful.
- 49 SRO/BR/CAL/4/224
Breadalbane to Joseph Bolton, Chairman of the Caledonian Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway, seeking advice on conflict of interest, 14 September 1881
For earlier North British designs on Inverness and Oban, prior to the 1860s amalgamations, see J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 1, pages 116 and 121
See also speech by counsel, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 30 April 1883
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325 ("without Breadalbane's consent, we cannot go at all.")
- 50 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
MacDougall to Conacher, 27 July 1894
- 51 WHM
John Scott, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 52 WHM
George Gow, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 53 WHM
Duncan MacDiarmid, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
MacDiarmid, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 28 March 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
- 54 WHM
MacDiarmid, Proof
- 55 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Breadalbane to Conacher, 21 October 1895
- 56 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3
Forman to Conacher, 14 August and 14 December 1894
Conacher to Gow, 15 August 1894
- 57 WHM
Sir Robert Menzies, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Menzies, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889, and Commons, 3 July 1889
- 58 WHM
Book of Reference, West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90
Correspondence re excambion of Corroul lands
Lord Abinger; John Burton (sheep manager for Colonel Walker); Cameron of Lochiel; and Menzies, Proofs for West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
- 59 WHM
Correspondence between MacRae, Flett & Rennie and Henry Gordon, Dumfries, solicitor for Colonel Walker; adduced to support speech by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
(The definitive letters were exchanged in June 1889)

- 60 WHM
Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 17 and 18 March 1890
- 61 WHM
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Gordon, 6 June 1889
See also Note 59 above
- 62 WHM
Correspondence re excambion of Corroul lands
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Minute of Agreement between Sir John Stirling-Maxwell and the West Highland Railway Company,
March 1893
- 63 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Stirling-Maxwell to Conacher, 12 August 1894
Malcolm to Arnott, 14 August 1894
Malcolm to Conacher, 25 August and 27 October 1894
Malcolm to MacDougall, 24 September 1894
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Arnott to Conacher, 1 and 15 October 1894
This “bombardment” (Stirling-Maxwell’s word) of complaint continued in 1895.
- 64 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Malcolm to Conacher, 27 October 1894
- 65 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Forman to Conacher, giving Forman’s interpretation of the West Highland Company’s obligations to Stirling-Maxwell, 29 August and 12 September 1894
Deuchars to Conacher, explaining that, in practice, the Corroul signalman had insufficient time to contact Arnott at Fort William before halting a train, 13 August 1895
Conacher to Malcolm, insisting that any concession be limited to Stirling-Maxwell himself, 16 August 1895
- 66 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Forman to Conacher, 12 September 1894
- 67 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Conacher to J. Renton, director of the North British Railway, 10 August 1894
- 68 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Stirling-Maxwell to Conacher, 5 June 1895
- 69 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Malcolm to Conacher, 3 May 1895
Arnott to Conacher, 6 December 1895
- 70 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Reports sent to Arnott by the Corroul signalman and the Tulloch stationmaster, 12 May 1897
Ensuing correspondence, including Arnott, Conacher, Deuchars and Malcolm, May-June 1897
Legal opinion submitted to Conacher, 15 June 1897
- 71 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Arnott to Conacher, 6 December 1895
- 72 SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division
- 73 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Plans for alterations at Corroul, meeting the minimum requirements of the Board of Trade, 3 and 22
December 1897 and 15 February 1898
- 74 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7

- 75 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Malcolm to Jackson, 20 June 1903
Jackson to Malcolm, 18 August 1903
- 76 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Malcolm, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
- 77 WHM
D. P. MacDonald, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 78 WHM
Alexander Craig, factor for the Lochtreighead estate, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
- 79 WHM
Craig, Proof, 1888-9
- 80 WHM
MacDonald, Proof, 1888-9
- 81 WHM
Alexander MacFarlane, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 82 WHM
The MacKintosh, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
The MacKintosh, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889,
and Commons, 3 July 1889
- 83 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Abinger, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 27 March 1889
- 84 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Speeches by counsel, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 2 and 5 April 1889
- 85 WHM
Ewen Cameron, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 86 WHM
Lochiel, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 87 WHM
Abinger, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 88 WHM
Rev D. Cameron, minister of Kilmonivaig, Proof against Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6
- 89 WHM
John Burton, farmer, Ardgour; and Angus Cameron, cattle dealer and auctioneer, Fort William, Proofs for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
Burton was previously sheep manager for the Lochtreighead estate.
See also Note 58 above.
- 90 WHM
Sir John Ramsden of Ardverickie to Malcolm, 20 May 1889
- 91 SRO/BR/WEH/23/1
Payment to The MacKintosh for withdrawal of opposition to West Highland Railway Bill of 1889-90,

- 12 May 1891
SRO/BR/WEH/4/4
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Wieland, 18 June 1894
- 92 SRO/BR/WEH/4/4
Lochiel to Wieland, 1 July 1894
- 93 WHM
Abinger, Proof
- 94 WHM
Donald Boyd, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
Donald Fraser, sheriff-clerk and town clerk, Fort William, Proof (with statistics) for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 95 WHM
Fraser, Proof
- 96 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
- 97 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Press cuttings of letters etc. inspired by, or favourable to, the Fort William 'town party', February 1888
- 98 WHM
Peter MacFarlane, Provost of Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Prospectus etc. of the Fort William Electric Lighting Company
- 99 WHM
Draft advertisement among the MacKenzie Papers
- 100 WHM
Donald MacKintosh, West End Hotel, Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
- 101 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Arnott to Conacher, 26 December 1894
- 102 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5
J. Carswell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 6 May 1896
- 103 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Arnott to Conacher, 12 September and 26 December 1894
- 104 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
John Walker, General Manager of the North British Railway, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Commons, 4 July 1889
WHM
MacDonald, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90
- 105 WHM
MacDonald, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
- 106 AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Correspondence and anecdotal material on D & J. McGregor, successors to Boyd's general merchandise business.
- 107 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
Abinger, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 3 May 1883
WHM

- 108 SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division
- 109 WHM
MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 14 March 1890
- 110 AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Register of Lilybank Temperance Hotel, Fort William
- 111 The Scotsman, 13 August 1894
Report of speeches at the Opening of the West Highland Railway, Fort William, 11 August
- 112 WHM
N. B. MacKenzie solicitor etc., Fort William, Proof for West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6
- 113 SRO/BR/TT(S)/52
North British Railway, Working Timetables for the Western Division
- 114 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Arnott to Conacher, 13 October 1894
- 115 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Arnott to Conacher, 24 September 1895
- 116 WHM
Feu Charter in favour of the West Highland Railway Company, executed by Mrs. Cameron-Campbell and her daughters
See also SRO/RHP 47388
- 117 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325
MacDonald, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 1 May 1883
- 118 WHM
Minute of a Special Meeting of the Police Commissioners of the Burgh of Fort William, 10 December 1888
- 119 SRO/RHP 46438
- 120 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Amended plans of the passenger and goods layouts at Fort William submitted to Conacher between September 1893 and March 1894
- 121 AUTHOR'S COLLECTION
Petition of the Commissioners of the Burgh of Fort William to the Lords of Committee of Privy Council for Trade & Plantations against the Operations of the West Highland Railway Company at Fort William, 1894
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Carswell to Conacher, warning that Major Marindin, Board of Trade inspector, might recommend moving the passenger station to the original site at the old fort, 12 July 1894
- 122 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Arnott to Conacher, 29 November 1895
- 123 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Arnott to Conacher, enclosing press cuttings in which Fraser identified with the attack on MacKenzie, 14 December 1895
- 124 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Arnott to Conacher, 29 November 1895
- 125 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3

Arnott to Conacher, reporting defeat in the Licensing Court, 17 April 1895

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/5

MacKenzie to J. Watson, Solicitor of the North British Railway, warning that defiance of the Dean-of-Guild Court was counter-productive, 28 November 1895

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6

Arnott to Conacher, enclosing press cuttings on the lack of “replacement” housing, 23 November 1895

126 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325

T. Waldron-Smith, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 8 May 1883

127 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

West Highland Railway Act, 59 & 60 Vict. Ch. ccxix, First Schedule

128 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4

Press cuttings

See also Note 123 above.

129 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4

Arnott to Conacher, 19 December 1895

130 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1

Conacher to Wieland, 22 March 1893

Chapter 5

Competition for subsidy: the “Lothian Lines”

Chapter 5

This chapter examines how the question of subsidised railway development, as proposed by the Napier Commission, was reopened by the West Highland promotion of 1888-9. It examines the Lothian Commission Report of 1890 and the complementary Treasury Committee Report of 1891. It explains how the West Highland route, terminating at Roshven or Mallaig, came to be seen as the prime option 'south of Strome Ferry', as against the several possibilities 'north of Strome Ferry' and the extension of the Dingwall & Skye route from Strome Ferry to Kyle of Lochalsh. The discussion subsequently centres on the reaction of the Highland Railway to the demand for new and unprofitable construction. This cannot be separated from the story of the West Highland Railway begun in Chapter 3 and resumed in Chapter 6. The Callander & Oban Railway, and therefore the Caledonian, were also affected. And this chapter reinforces the argument that the North British Railway was at first ambivalent about completing the West Highland route beyond Fort William.

When Forman's West Highland Railway reached Parliament in 1889, the promoters carefully pointed out that they were not seeking financial assistance from the state. On the whole they successfully created the impression that it would be unjust to reject the West Highland Bill. Here was a scheme, widely supported by landowners and guaranteed by the North British Company, which met an acknowledged need but made no demands on the public purse. It was questionable whether the Roshven section would ever have been commenced without subsidy in some form. But Roshven had been struck from the Bill, and opponents could not exploit the ambiguous status of this part of the project, save by casting doubt on pledges that the west-of-Fort William arm would be revived as soon as possible. Subsidy had featured more prominently in the attempted 'West Highland' promotion of 1887-8. The Fort William 'town party' did not count on immediate help from the Conservative Government, but they hoped for some expression of approval, eventually translating into a grant or guarantee, which would help to engage the North British. Cameron approached the Marquess of Lothian, Conservative Secretary of State for Scotland, at the beginning of 1888 on the basis that, although Lochaber would be satisfied with a railhead at Fort William, extending the line to the west coast would complement the Government's crofting reforms.

(The) Government would scarcely feel themselves justified in advancing the funds for the construction of a ... Railway (from the South) but ... they might find it within their jurisdiction to guarantee a certain percentage for a specified time upon a limited amount of the Capital for the portion of the line between Fort William and Mallaig Bay^[1]

This echoed the Napier Report. A.G. Morrison's argument also reappeared: the landlords must first commit themselves. Cameron of Lochiel held that Lochaber would have accepted a railway by any route. He also believed that the construction of a line to Fort William was bound to reawaken public interest in the Napier Commission's findings, whereupon the Government "would be compelled to aid in the formation of an extension to the western seaboard".^[2] Though Lochiel endorsed the 'country' scheme for a Connel Ferry - Fort William connection, it is clear that he was consulted and kept informed by the 'town' interest when they sketched their 'West Highland' route (Glen Coe - Fort William - Arisaig) for submission to the North British and to the Scottish Office. ("Arisaig" meant the broad district from Moidart to Morar, with Roshven bay, on Loch Ailort, and Mallaig bay, just south of Loch Nevis, as the two most likely harbours.) On 11 February, 1888 Lothian replied that he could not provide a Treasury Guarantee such as Cameron had suggested.^[3] John Walker of the North British had already indicated that his Company favoured an arrangement whereby the Government became an ordinary shareholder (for £300,000) in the proposed 'West Highland' line. Cameron wanted to involve "influential men in the Western Islands", while C. Fraser-MacKintosh, M.P. for Inverness-shire, presented a petition to Parliament.^[4] When the Government did not respond, Walker declined to commit the North British beyond promising to work a Glen Coe line to Fort William on reasonable terms, as Chapter 3 has shown.

James Thompson, the Caledonian General Manager, did not pursue the suggestion that a Connel Ferry - Fort William - Arisaig line would attract subsidy. A Callander & Oban branch need not reach beyond Fort William. Oban was to remain the Caledonian railhead for the west coast, dividing the traffic with the Highland Railway at Strome Ferry. Thompson probably judged that the North British would not be drawn unless subsidy was certain, in which case the Caledonian would have time to intervene. Throughout 1888 he left the next move to the Lochaber 'country' petitioners. He did not grasp, until Forman's West Highland Bill was submitted in November, how rapidly Forman's scheme had overtaken the rival plans of 'town' and 'country'.^[5] Imperfectly informed, the opposition assumed that the revamped West Highland, like the original, would bid for state aid. In December, 1888 the Highland Company, besides making the usual preparations for a parliamentary contest, drafted a special protest "against the Loan Commissioners giving public money to the scheme".^[6] This missed the target. The West Highland promoters made subsidy seem a secondary consideration. Government assistance might be appropriate when the time came to continue the line to the west coast or add other branches along the route; the main scheme, from Helensburgh to Fort William, rested securely on community endeavour and the North British guarantee.

Walker reinforced this presentation, at the same time parrying the Caledonian charge that the North British, seeking a cut-off route to Oban, would abandon the West Highland north of Crianlarich. His testimony was measured: 100 miles to Fort William was a large first step and, like the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway in their day, the West Highland must proceed step by step. Local efforts and North British confidence in the project would call forth sufficient investment to build the line to Fort William. If necessary, the North British would find the final £150,000. Roshven might or might not be approved in 1889; whatever the outcome, the route would eventually be pushed to the coast.^[7]

Thus, despite all the earlier indications, Forman's West Highland scheme achieved its Act without any provision for subsidy. However, with the new railway under construction (October 1889 - August 1894), Lochiel's prediction would sooner or later be put to the test. The Conservative Government, or their successors, would be obliged to address the Napier Commission's tentative proposals for assisting a west-of-Fort William extension. That Lothian responded sooner rather than later is largely explained by the intervention of Joseph Chamberlain, whose land campaigns had come to embrace the Highlands and Islands. Throughout the parliament of 1886-92 Chamberlain, detached from Gladstone but not firmly allied with Salisbury's Conservatives, sought a programme around which the Liberal Party could reunite. His ideas on land were unwelcome to most proprietors, but his advocacy of railway development in the Highlands, including light railways for the Islands, helped persuade the Conservatives that a technocratic approach could contain discontent. The policies designed to "kill" Home Rule in Ireland, if transferred to the Scottish Highlands, would make fundamental land reform unnecessary.^[8]

At the end of March, 1889 Chamberlain headed a deputation of Crofter-Liberal M.P.s and various allies, who pressed the Government to apply their Irish policies, suitably modified, in Scotland. He subsequently appeared before the Lords Committee examining the West Highland Bill.

(We) were aware that the principle hitherto adopted ... was to leave all such matters to private enterprise. But we thought that ... private enterprise could hardly be expected to undertake the work with(out) some kind of Government guarantee. (The) precedent was created by proposals ... with regard to the western districts of Ireland; and we thought that the claims of the Highlands ... were of the same character. ^[9]

If the Government agreed in principle that railway promotions in the Highlands deserved a "small guarantee", they should appoint a new Commission to review all the lines which might bid for state support. The

Committee asked whether Chamberlain had discussed different forms of aid with G.J.Goschen, the Chancellor of the Exchequer: Chamberlain emphatically favoured a Treasury Guarantee from the Consolidated Fund.^[10] Counsel for the West Highland flourished Chamberlain. The promoters' strategy precluded a late appeal for subsidy, and there is no suggestion that Chamberlain was deployed to save the Fort William - Roshven line. Counsel for the Highland Railway urged Chamberlain to agree that a line north of Strome Ferry - to Ullapool or to Lochinver, would serve the crofting and fishing communities better than the West Highland route, while counsel for the Callander & Oban Railway reminded him that the West Highland offered little to the population of Linnhe and Lorne.^[11] The deputation had included declared supporters of the proposed Garve & Ullapool Railway, the one scheme of which Chamberlain had any detailed knowledge. He repeated that it was "the general principle" which most concerned him, and not the particular merits of Roshven or Ullapool.^[12] He certainly helped to make sure that the putative West Highland extension to the coast would be weighed against other promotions 'north of Strome'.

Lord Lothian visited the west coast for himself during the summer of 1889, when he made a brief call at Roshven and heard something of the case for Mallaig, as against the various options further north.^[13] His Western Highlands and Islands Commission, chaired by Spencer Walpole, was appointed at the end of the year. 'Lothian Commission' and 'Walpole Commission' are interchangeable designations; the former is used throughout this discussion.^[14] Walpole and his colleagues were to concern themselves with the Hebrides, giving attention to the adjacent mainland "in a secondary degree". In April, 1890 their remit was widened to include the north coast and the Orkneys and Shetlands. Lothian stipulated that the Government did not intend "any expenditure of a purely charitable character, or such as merely aims at the relief of temporary distress or the temporary employment of labour"; nor did they intend "to establish at the public expense any competition with existing private enterprise". Speed was enjoined, and the Commissioners were criticised in some quarters as too perfunctory and "flippant".^[15]

The Report was ready by July 1890.^[16] It identified six rail routes to the west coast:- the West Highland line continued to Mallaig; the Dingwall & Skye line, continued to Kyle of Lochalsh; Achnasheen - Aultbea; Garve - Ullapool; Invershin (Culrain) - Lochinver; and Lairg - Laxford Bridge. It also sketched light railway systems for Skye, centred on Portree, and for Lewis, centred on Stornoway. An appendix detailed new or improved steamer routes which, taken together, would offer an integrated rail-sea net-

work, based, for the time being, on the two existing railheads at Strome Ferry and Oban. The Fort William - Mallaig line was estimated at £285,000; the Strome Ferry - Kyle of Lochalsh line at £115,000, the Garve - Ullapool line (which was before Parliament during the Commission's investigations) at £195,000 and the Achnasheen - Aultbea line at £293,000. No surveys were available for the Lochinver scheme or for its Laxford Bridge competitor: the Commissioners put them at £260,000 and £220,000 respectively. The Aultbea and Ullapool schemes were likewise competitors; the Commissioners considered that the former would have to be realigned to serve Loch Maree and Gairloch before terminating on Loch Ewe, while the latter would have to be carried further down Loch Broom. The 150-mile coastline from Loch Carron (Strome Ferry) to the Pentland Firth (Scrabster) might well require two new railheads, besides a light railway from Thurso to Gills Bay. The Commissioners thought in terms of Aultbea versus Loch Broom, and Lochinver versus Loch Laxford. The Aultbea promoters counted on receiving a grant of £40,000, which could be taken as a marker for each of these four lines. If the Government chose to support two of them, some £80,000 of aid would be needed. Pending the completion of new railways, the steamer service should to be reorganised, and David MacBrayne or another operator should be subsidised to the tune of £8,000 - £10,000 per year. Only one Hebridean light railway (Stornoway-to-Carlaway) had been surveyed in any detail, after the Commissioners had asked that it be done. The Islanders were too ready to draw parallels with Ireland and must be disabused. The inhabitants of Lewis had no other proposal "than that Government should find all the capital, and should also be responsible for the cost of working". The Highland Company hoped that the state would bear the full cost of constructing the Kyle of Lochalsh extension; this was also "quite inadmissible".

On railways for the Islands, the Commissioners explained their attitude at some length. ("As the action of Government in respect of light railways in Ireland has often been quoted to us in connection with similar lines in ... Lewis and Skye, we may perhaps be permitted to point out several essential points of difference.") Irish light lines were generally feeders to existing routes, with no intervening sea passage. Irish agricultural traffic was regular and evenly spread, which made rail feeders relatively efficient; Hebridean traffic had seasonal surges, especially in fish but also in livestock; and the real need was a better rail service on the mainland, in conjunction with the steamers. State assistance for Irish light lines was always conditional on some input from local authorities and other interested parties, besides the established Railway Companies which agreed to operate these lines.

Clearly the Commissioners were mindful of Lothian's injunction that aid in any form was not to be offered without "co-operation ... from local sources".^[17] And they considered that it was the business of central government to keep the bigger picture in view. Development of a few strategic harbours, with rail facilities where appropriate, was the heart of the matter. The parochial clamour for piers and boat slips should be addressed to the local authorities. They added some particular recommendations. Stornoway Harbour Board might usefully take responsibility for the whole of Lewis, with a grant of £50,000; before new roads or light railways into Stornoway were developed, a steamer strong enough to ply the outer coast of Long Island should be tried. The telegraph network, which the Fishery Board already supported out of the Herring Brand Fund, ought to be completed as quickly as possible. Improved mail and telegraph services had already shown their worth, allowing fishermen and fish-buyers to report the movements of the herring and to order supplies as required. Before allocating the proposed new steamer subsidy, the Government should consult the Post Office, which already supported the mail steamers.

All the 'north of Strome' schemes required junction arrangements with the Highland Railway - at Garve (for Ullapool) or Achnasheen (for Aultbea) on the Dingwall & Skye route, at Culrain or Invershin (for Lochinver) or Lairg (for Laxford Bridge) on the Far North route. Unless others intervened, it would be a question of persuading the reluctant Highland Company to support one or more of these projects; and unfair competition would not arise. But the West Highland route to Mallaig would compete with Strome Ferry. The Loch Eil & Mallaig syndicate, whose efforts are more fully considered in Chapter 6, gave the Commissioners to understand that the North British Railway Company would support their scheme in order to complete the West Highland Railway to the sea. They sought an outright grant for a new harbour at Mallaig (the Commission suggested £15,000) and a Treasury Guarantee of 2½%, for a limited period on their estimated capital of £285,000. The advantages of the new route were held to outweigh the limitations of Mallaig bay, where the deep-water anchorage was constricted and vulnerable to a northerly fetch. Mindful of Lothian's warning against subsidised competition, the Commissioners advised that the Highland Railway should be given "proportionate assistance" to carry the Dingwall & Skye line on to Kyle of Lochalsh. Thereafter the Highland Company and the West Highland would be "on nearly equal terms as to convenience and propinquity to the fishing grounds and lines of steamboat route". With new railheads in place, the grant-aided steamer service could be restructured and overall distribution of subsidy reconsidered. State support for steamers operating out of Oban would be to the advantage of the Callander & Oban Railway and might be considered roughly equivalent to any assistance offered to

the Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh lines.

Overall the Lothian Report was an unsatisfactory production, giving ammunition to those who held that the worst distress in the Highlands and Islands was already over. It seemed to accept that poverty, if not actual destitution, must be the crofter's lot, especially when he insisted on remaining a crofter. State-assisted railway development was justified in so far as it would counter conditions unfavourable to commerce, challenge the indolence of the people and turn crofter-fishermen into full-time fishermen.^[18] On which scheme to support, the Report gave little help. Two 'north of Strome' lines besides extension to Kyle of Lochalsh, in addition to the Loch Eil & Mallaig project and light railways in Lewis and Skye, were more than the Treasury would entertain. The general proposals, including steamer subsidies, were embodied in the Western Highlands and Islands Works Act, 1891.^[19] But the question of new railways was referred to a Treasury Committee. ("Special Committee on the Improvement of Railway Communication on the West Coast of Scotland" or "North West Coast of Scotland Railways Committee"), who were required to complete their work before the end of the parliamentary session.

Appointed in May, 1891, the Committee reported in November. The Treasury's instructions declared an intention to assist "any one of the lines", provided that "the remainder of the cost can be raised from other sources". The Garve & Ullapool Railway was already authorised. The Loch Eil & Mallaig promotion appeared to have substance. Supporters of the other routes reviewed in the Lothian Report deserved a hearing.^[20]

Like the Lothian Commissioners, the Treasury Committee felt obliged to endorse more than one scheme. ("One railway, wherever constructed, will not meet the requirements of the districts lying respectively north and south of the existing terminus of the Highland Railway at Strome Ferry.")^[21] Loch Laxford offered little to the western parts of Ross-shire, Aultbea little to the western parts of Sutherland. No local contributions to the Lairg - Laxford Bridge line were forthcoming, though it could be assumed that land would be given at a nominal price. The Aultbea interest claimed to have raised £12,500 in addition to offers of land. The Invershin - Lochinver line would have the backing of the Duke of Sutherland. Local landowners had met all the preliminary and parliamentary costs of the Garve & Ullapool promotion. They were able to do so because the Highland Railway, though less than enthusiastic, did not oppose them.^[22] The crofters who would be employed as navvies were ready to accept a proportion of their wages in

shares.

All the 'north of Strome' lines passed through relatively easy country east of the watershed, but in every case the final miles to or along the west coast would push up costs, which were likely to average more than £8,000 per mile. Ullapool was not a suitable railhead. Isle Martin, further down Loch Broom, was more promising; any other site to seaward would require expensive protection works. Lochinver, midway between Cape Wrath and Skye, offered a good harbour ("3½ miles from the open sea, and 7 miles from the passing trade route"), which needed only to be lit and buoyed.

With a railway terminus and fishery centre established at Lochinver, and extended steamboat communication ... between Lochinver and various points on the coast, ... the pressing wants of the districts north of ... Skye would be met.

The Committee's ideal solution 'north of Strome' was to extend the Garve & Ullapool line north to Lochinver; but, recognising how expensive this would be, they settled for the Invershin - Lochinver line.

The 'Loch Eil & Mallaig' promotion was strongly recommended. Just as communities north of Loch Torridon would be best served by a new railway to Lochinver, so communities south of Kylerhea would be best served by the West Highland route.

To meet the wants of the parts southward .., including the south-west coast of Skye and the neighbouring islands, the most suitable locality for a railway terminus and fishery port is Mallaig Bay... (The) benefits which would accrue ... from the construction of (this) line, in conjunction with the making of the West Highland Railway, are so great that the scheme, whenever ripe for adoption, would be deserving of assistance from such funds as the Government might have at their disposal for the encouragement of railway development.

But the Committee warned that the promoters' estimate of £260,000 for a Fort William -to-Mallaig railway - £25,000 less than the Lothian Commissioners had calculated and equivalent to about £6,500 per mile, was inadequate. There was easy going along Loch Eil, but thereafter the Mallaig line could not avoid some twenty five miles of heavy works across the Rough Bounds and along the Atlantic coast. £45,000 for Mallaig harbour was also a low figure, if the limitations of the site were to be overcome. The Committee did not query the promoters' ready assumption that the North British Company would work the line, but they doubted, at least by implication, whether a grant of £100,000 with an additional contribution towards the harbour, the terms suggested by the Loch Eil & Mallaig syndicate, would attract the rest of the capital required. And they added that 'Mallaig could only be recommended for the want of a

more favoured position being attainable". The harbour would be congested and the proposed break-water would give only limited protection, though larger vessels could shelter, at need, in Loch Nevis. Though they did not explicitly weigh Mallaig against Roshven, they implied that a more commodious harbour well inside Loch Nevis would be better than either. Rail access to Loch Nevis would be difficult and expensive to achieve.

Thus the Committee's choices, both 'north of Strome' (Lochinver via the Far North line) and 'south of Strome' (Mallaig as terminus of the West Highland route), were second best. This was not the clear-cut decision that the Conservative Government wanted. Like the Lothian Commissioners, the Committee assumed that any 'north of Strome' line would fall to the Highland Railway, while any injury which the Highland Company might suffer from the Mallaig scheme, which must give the 'south of Strome' route to the North British, would be redressed by subsidising the extension of the Dingwall & Skye route from Strome Ferry to Kyle of Lochalsh. They concluded that state assistance was, in any case, inescapable.

(None) of the suggested railway projects can be regarded as possessing a commercial basis of the elements of success as ordinary railway undertakings (sic). If ... the districts in question, or any of them, are to obtain the advantages of railway communication, these must be afforded on grounds other than anticipation of direct financial return.

It is easy to forget the criteria which the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee had in mind when assessing prospective west coast railway harbours; for their criteria were rapidly overtaken in the twenty years before 1914 by the advance of the steam drifter and steam trawler, much less likely to be storm-bound north of Ardnamurchan and able to run on from Kyle to Mallaig, or from Mallaig to Oban, if crowded wharfs or poor prices impelled them to do so.^[23] In the 1880s and 1890s Mallaig (or Roshven) was seen as the focus of an underdeveloped local fishery in Loch Hourm, in Loch Nevis and off the south-west coast of Skye. The sailing smacks of the crofter - fishermen could run to Mallaig, where fish buyers would compete for business, and return to the fishing grounds inside a day. Making Oban, round Ardnamurchan, was seldom a practical option, and Ballachulish, suggested by the Glasgow & North Western promoters, was not a realistic alternative. Making Strome Ferry via Kylerhea, where the tides dictated sailing times, could mean a forty-eight hour round trip. With a convenient railhead and no longer tied to a steamer which might be only only a few days on station, the fishery would become more specialised and professional, following the example of the east coast.^[24] But in the short term everything turned on the range and limited sea-keeping qualities of the existing west coast fishing boats. That the

weakest boats found even Arisaig Point hazardous was an argument against Roshven and in favour of Mallaig. The doubtful capabilities of the west coast sail boats in land-locked Loch Broom likewise told against Ullapool and in favour of Lochinver.^[25]

Both Commission and Committee took it for granted that any new railway port would accommodate MacBrayne's mail steamers and other passenger and cargo vessels. And it was to be expected that the buyers and curers who regularly chartered steamers to follow the shoals or carry fish from Stornoway or Lochboisdale or Castlebay to the mainland would try a new rail route instead of sending direct to the Clyde. The "Stornoway Senders" syndicate, generally known as the Fleetwood Company, had high hopes of Mallaig. Their Stornoway - Fleetwood shuttle needed three steamers, but a daily link with Mallaig would need only one.^[26] It does not appear that there was detailed examination of the ability of this or that harbour to handle such traffic alongside local landings, if and when the latter increased. Yet increase was the whole object, and east coast boats working the west coast were already setting the pace. Moreover a better rail service was expected to increase the trade in fresh (or lightly "sprinkled") herring and encourage a greater catch of white fish. Experience would show that the seasons for herring fishing and white fishing were not so neatly complementary as to sustain a steady business; there could be simultaneous gluts, when the two trades came into conflict. And in time of glut chartered steamers jostled with local boats. As the steam drifters multiplied there came a new demand for coaling facilities. Chapter 9 returns to these issues.

Neither Commission nor Committee called for dedicated railway steamers. The Highland Railway at Strome, after various experiments, had come to rely on MacBrayne and other carriers, as did the Callander & Oban Company, though they both chartered additional vessels on their own account during the fishing seasons.^[27] In 1888-9 the West Highland promoters had negotiated with MacBrayne for connections at Fort William, Corpach and Roshven. Neither the West Highland Company nor the North British sought powers to operate steamers out of Mallaig; but it was widely, though erroneously, assumed in the Islands that such powers would go hand in hand with any subsidy which the Fort William - Mallaig rail link obtained.^[28]

During 1890-1 the directors of the Highland Railway had to decide how to respond to the recommendations of the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee. Allowed a preview of the Lothian Report, Andrew Dougall, Secretary and General Manager of the Highland Railway, responded that to subsidise the Mallaig line would be contradictory, since Lothian had ruled out unfair competition. The Loch Eil & Mallaig project, ostensibly a private initiative by Baird of Knoydart and other landowners, was 'practically a revival of the West Highland scheme to Roshven', which Parliament had examined and rejected in 1889.

If Mr. Baird ... wishes to have a railway ..., he should go to Parliament ... in the ordinary way, ... and if he provides the capital, as the proprietors of the (Dingwall &) Skye Line did, he will be entitled to a fair hearing, but he has no right to have a line made at the public expense (to) interfere with an existing line ..., the proprietors of which have already submitted to great sacrifices.^[29]

In September, 1890 the Highland directors continued the attack in a Memorial to W.H. Smith, the Leader of the Commons.

The Dingwall & Skye Railway was constructed ... wholly ... by private persons ... to provide better communication to (their) estates ...; but another motive ... was to provide access ... to the fishing grounds ... The Line ... never paid ..., and when it was amalgamated with the Highland Company the Ordinary Stock was taken over at 50 per cent discount. (It) would be a very grave injustice ... if public money were contributed for a competing line, which would still further diminish the value of the Dingwall & Skye ... (The) application of public money in any shape to ... new lines in any degree of a competitive character on the Mainland of Scotland ... would kill private enterprise, as no one would venture his money in ... a line which ... might have a rival set up by the Government. ... (Railways) have been ... extended by private enterprise in the Highlands as rapidly as the circumstances justify; ... with only one fourteenth of the population of Scotland, the Highlands possess one seventh of the railway mileage.^[30]

Dougall had already pledged, when he met the Lothian Commissioners, that his Company would extend the Skye line to Kyle of Lochalsh and build a new pier there for £120,000 outright, thereafter working and maintaining the route without any further state support. But he implied that this depended on whether the Mallaig scheme was abandoned.^[31] On the various 'north of Strome' schemes, the Highland board sought advice from the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, which operated subsidised lines to the Irish west coast.^[32] Early in 1891 the Scottish Office formally invited the Highland Railway to state terms for building and operating the new routes identified in the Lothian Report. Dougall reiterated the Highland Company's objections to the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway. His directors were now prepared to contribute £25,000 to the first cost of the Kyle of Lochalsh extension. They would contribute nothing

to the northerly schemes, all of which would divert traffic from Strome and Kyle; but they would “work and maintain any of them which may be made, at 2s.2d. per train mile”.^[33]

By the end of March, 1891, after negotiations in London, Dougall was convinced that he had obtained as much as could be won for the Dingwall & Skye route - a Treasury grant of £45,000 towards the ten difficult miles of new construction between Strome Ferry and Kyle of Lochalsh. The Highland directors were still reluctant; but Dougall, back in London, assured W.L.Jackson, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, that under a Late Bill or other arrangement, construction could begin at once; for all the land to be taken belonged to Sir Kenneth Matheson, a member of the board.^[34] (In the event a regular Act of Parliament would be obtained in 1893.) This decision owed something to the threat that the Great North of Scotland Railway would intervene. Alone among the ‘north of Strome’ lines, the Garve & Ullapool Railway had secured its Act (1890). The Great North now entered the field, promising to build, maintain and operate the Garve - Ullapool line in perpetuity, in return for a Government guarantee of £6000 per annum over twenty five years.^[35] On 24 April 1891 the Treasury asked Dougall to submit his “observations” on the Great North offer, which of course entailed running powers for the Aberdeen-based Company over the Highland system to Dingwall and along the Dingwall & Skye to Garve.^[36]

Dougall protested first to Jackson at the Treasury (28 April) and then to Lothian (5 May).^[37] The Garve & Ullapool Railway must not be the means of “introducing a hostile company into their district”, and the Highland Railway insisted on working the Ullapool line as Parliament had envisaged. The Great North would send Ullapool fish traffic via Aberdeen, when the Highland main line was seventy miles shorter - 100 miles shorter once the Aviemore cut-off was ready. The Great North wanted only access to Inverness and had no real concern for the North West, despite dishonest attempts to raise support in Lewis. The Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme amounted to subsidised invasion, and the Great North approach to the Garve & Ullapool Company was even more blatant, utterly at odds with Lothian’s declared desire to preserve fair competition. To subsidise the Loch Eil & Mallaig, which could only become an appendage of the West Highland, was really to subsidise the North British. To subsidise the Garve & Ullapool, on the terms suggested, was really to subsidise the Great North of Scotland. North British and Great North would filch the Highland Railway’s hard-won traffic. All this recalled Caledonian complaints about North British designs on Oban. The Highland directors were prepared, if necessary, to match the Great North offer, just as they were prepared, in the end, to find the larger part of the capital to advance to Kyle of

Lochalsh. They would work the Ullapool line in perpetuity, given a twenty five year guarantee. Kyle or Ullapool (or Kyle and Ullapool), safely in the Highland Company's hands, ought to settle the whole question.^[38] But the Government, well aware that the Lothian Commission had complicated rather than resolved the choices, resorted to the Treasury Committee.

When the Committee met the Highland board in Inverness at the end of July, 1891, they were already moving towards the formula embodied in their Report - a new railhead 'north of Strome', a new railhead 'south of Strome' and extension of the Dingwall & Skye route to Kyle of Lochalsh.^[39] Two months later the Committee sought the Highland Company's terms "to construct, work and maintain" a line to Lochinver, the best 'north of Strome' option. Lochinver was to be reached either from Invershin on the Far North route or from Ullapool, by continuing the Garve & Ullapool Railway along the coast.^[40] Dougall once more indicated reluctant co-operation.

(The) present line ... to Strome Ferry was laid out ... to accommodate the traffic of Skye and Stornoway, and it fulfils that purpose, so that either of the lines (to Lochinver) would ... be in competition with it. If the Government, however wish another line .., the Highland Company will not oppose it, provided it is worked in friendly relations with the Highland Company.^[41]

For the Invershin - Lochinver line, passing either north or south of Loch Assynt and Suilven, the Highland Railway wanted £250,000 outright. For the Ullapool - Lochinver extension, a much tougher proposition, they wanted £420,000 outright, additional to the cost of construction from Garve to Ullapool. Both estimates included a new pier at Lochinver. Dougall added a rider that the Highland Company did not accept the need for a 'south of Strome' scheme. It was to be understood that the Lochinver scheme would "supersede any other Line to the West Coast which has been suggested".

In the knowledge that Lothian was under pressure to endorse Mallaig, the Company continued, during the first half of 1892, to lobby both the Scottish Office and the Treasury against the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway^[42]. It is convenient to pursue discussion of the Kyle of Lochalsh extension and the 'north of Strome' lines through 1892 into 1893 before turning in more detail to the Loch Eil & Mallaig project in Chapter 6. On 1 June, 1892, Dougall wrote both to Lothian and to Goschen.

(The) Company will ... extend their Line ... to Kyle, on condition that the Government does not subsidise any other Line to the West Coast, and that they pay the ... Company ... £20,000 towards

... a suitable Pier at the Kyle terminus. The Directors ... concur ... that the Culrain and Lochinver Line is best suited for the development of the Fishing and Crofting interests ... and will be prepared to construct, work and maintain that Line in perpetuity, provided the Government guarantee 5 per cent on a sum of £250,000 for ... thirty years.^[43]

It will be seen that the Highland board had thrice modified their terms in respect of Kyle of Lochalsh - first demanding the entire cost of construction (June, 1890), then promising to find £25,000 (January, 1891), then agreeing to accept a grant of £45,000 (April, 1891), and ultimately asking only the cost of the new pier, provided the Mallaig line was refused assistance. As for the terms suggested for the Invershin - Lochinver line, the Highland board cannot have been unaware that the Mallaig promoters were seeking a similar arrangement. The Government's decision on Mallaig was imminent and it may be that Dougall's letters should be seen as part of the Highland Company's preparations to contest the Mallaig scheme in Parliament. On 2 June the Treasury officially informed the Highland Railway that the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme would be assisted.^[44] But thereafter the Highland Company had to deal with the Liberal Government of 1892-5, whose attitude to the findings of the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee was undefined. It added to uncertainty that the Loch Eil & Mallaig seemed becalmed after the promoters had failed to secure an improved offer from the outgoing Conservative Government, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In October, 1892 W.C.Dunbar, Permanent Assistant Under-Secretary at the Scottish Office, re-examined the Garve & Ullapool line. Would the Highland Railway consider "an amicable settlement" whereby the route might be developed (and perhaps extended to Lochinver) jointly with the Great North of Scotland Railway? At the same time Dunbar asked Dougall to clarify how the Invershin - Lochinver line might be guaranteed.

(Do) you mean that, in the event of the surplus revenue of the Line being sufficient to pay, say, a 2 per cent dividend, the Government will still continue to pay ... the guaranteed 3 per cent ... or that ... they will only pay 1 per cent ...? ^[45]

Dougall replied that in all circumstances the Highland Company would insist on working the Garve & Ullapool Railway, without any form of partnership. For the Invershin - Lochinver scheme he envisaged 'top up' payments by the Treasury, not an absolute guarantee of 3% unrelated to earnings.^[46] What prompted Dunbar's initiative is not clear. There may have been renewed probing on the part of the Great North. Both the Scottish Office and the Treasury were known to be examining ways of varying a guaran-

tee in relation to revenue, though their new political masters gave no particular lead.^[47]

Sensing that the Liberals wanted only a quick solution, the Highland directors reopened negotiations. They reminded the Government that the Dingwall & Skye promoters had always intended to reach Kyle of Lochalsh. But for the limitations of Strome Ferry, there would have been no agitation for other routes. If the line was now extended to Kyle the agitation would soon recede. In November, 1892 Dougall made a direct approach to Sir William Harcourt, the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The surveys and estimates made in 1864 have been revised, and estimates have been made (for) a Pier ... at Kyle, at which the largest steamers may call at all states of the tide, and (for) a Pier at Kyleakin, on the Skye side, suitable for a Steam Ferry. The total cost will be about £180,000 ... The Directors have resolved to ... revive the powers of their Act of 1865 (and) to proceed with the works provided an arrangement can be made to get financial assistance from the Treasury. They do not see their way to throw the whole burden on the Shareholders, as the reasons for extending the Line are more the benefit of the population and the fishing industry than profit or dividend.^[48]

The pier at Strome would be written off, having cost some £20,000 "from first to last". The extension would generate little or no local traffic. The Company proposed to return to the "extremely moderate" terms suggested in 1891 - an outright grant of £45,000. In December the Treasury, in consultation with the Scottish Office and the Board of Trade, agreed to support the Kyle of Lochalsh scheme. £45,000 would be paid to the Highland Railway when the Dingwall & Skye route was completed through to Kyle and the new Kyle - Kyleakin ferry was in operation.^[49] In January, 1893 Dougall promised "all due expedition"^[50]. The Dingwall & Skye Extension Act was passed in June. Construction began in September. The line was opened through to Kyle in 1897. The Garve & Ullapool interest fought a stubborn defensive action; but authorization of the line to Kyle was followed by an Act winding up the Garve & Ullapool Railway.^[51] A 'Loch Maree and Aultbea' scheme was lodged alongside the Highland Railway's Kyle promotion, perhaps with the connivance of the Great North of Scotland Company. The Aultbea Bill made provision for running powers whereby the Great North could reach Achnasheen.^[52] This may have been no more than an attempt by the Aultbea interest to embroil the Highland Company with the Great North, delaying the Kyle extension and keeping their own scheme in play^[52]. Dougall impressed on the Government how any "duplication" on the Dingwall & Skye route (by which he meant the Ullapool line or the Aultbea line) would only ensure that the Kyle extension never paid its way "even approximately".^[53] The Lochinver scheme, as a feeder to the Far North route, was more acceptable - if the Government really wanted to pursue it. In January, 1893 Dougall, conceding that "agitation" for a 'north of Strome' line

was likely to continue, renewed his Company's offer to promote a Lochinver branch, so that "the question of the West Coast Railways might be .. finally disposed of". The Conservatives had never intended to build "government lines" without some input from the working Company, and it was even more unlikely that the Liberals would do so. The Highland directors accepted that the Lochinver scheme would have to be promoted in conventional fashion, in the expectation that a Treasury Guarantee would help to secure the necessary investment. They also accepted that the Liberals would not supplement a Guarantee with mileage payments. But they asked that 90% of revenue be allocated to working and maintenance when the line opened, reducing to 65% or less after six years, so that a gradually increasing proportion of revenue would be devoted to diluting the Treasury's obligation.^[54]

Both the Garve & Ullapool Bill in its original form in 1889 and the Loch Maree & Aultbea Bill of 1892-3 included clauses which anticipated state assistance.^[55] A very similar clause would be included in the Late Bill for the 'West Highland Banavie & Mallaig' line in 1893 and in the West Highland Mallaig Extension Bill of 1893-4. But Treasury support in guarantee form required a separate Public Bill in every case. This is discussed more fully in Chapters 6 and 7. Dougall and his directors were influenced by the knowledge that the Conservatives had offered a Treasury Guarantee to the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme. The North British Company would not take up the Mallaig line as a West Highland promotion unless the Liberals made the same commitment. Like the North British, the Highland Company wanted, if at all possible, a more generous allowance for working and maintenance expenses. The Caledonian Railway worked the Oban line at cost but helped the Callander & Oban Company to service debentures.^[56] The North British made a virtue of their promise to work the West Highland at 50%.^[56] When the railway industry as a whole increasingly had to devote some 60% of gross revenue to working and maintenance this was foolhardy.^[57] The North British proved reluctant to work a west-of-Fort William line at 50%, and the Highland Company, with experience of working the Dingwall & Skye and Far North lines when these were nominally independent, was similarly wary in respect of any new 'north of Strome' line.

Despite Dougall's hopes that the Kyle of Lochalsh extension would simplify if not conclude the 'north of Strome' debate, a lively argument persisted. Supporters of the Garve & Ullapool line asserted that Loch Broom was perfectly accessible and that the Garve - Ullapool - Lochinver route, which the Treasury Committee had reluctantly rejected, would serve a larger crofting and fishing population than the cross-country line from Invershin.^[58] They also alleged that the Duke of Sutherland, having originally

endorsed Ullapool when the Highland board decided to give their qualified support, later used his influence as a great landowner in favour of the Invershin - Lochinver line, because it would serve his estate; the duke had “button holed” Gladstone when the prime minister visited Dunrobin, but the proprietors behind the Garve & Ullapool Railway had used no improper influence.^[59] The Kyle line itself generated controversy; some Highland Railway shareholders rebelled against the cost.^[60] The Mallaig interest seized on the grant which the Liberals had given, arguing that £45,000 outright for ten miles was relatively more generous than a Treasury Guarantee for the forty miles from Fort William to Mallaig.^[61] Dougall’s intention, during 1893-4, was to use Lochinver against Mallaig, just as he had used Ullapool against Roshven in 1889. The Highland Company had little enthusiasm for any ‘north of Strome’ line. The real aim was to prevent, or at least delay, completion of the West Highland route to the west coast.

Chapter 5 Appendices

I. Lothian Commission, 1889 - 90
 Secretary, G. H. Murray.

Spencer Walpole Chairman	Inspector of Fisheries, Secretary of the Post Office, Lieutenant- Governor of the Isle of Man
Sir James King Deputy Chairman	Director of the Caledonian Railway

Sheriff Dugald MacKechnie

Commander Arthur Farquhar R.N.

John Wolfe Barry	Civil engineer
Malcolm MacNeill	Secretary of the Napier Commission

II Treasury Committee, 1891
 Secretary J. M. Nicolle.

General C.S.Hutchinson R.E.	Railway Department of the Board of Trade
Admiral D.S.Nares	Polar explorer, adviser to Admiralty and Board of Trade.
Henry Tennant	Director of the North Eastern Railway.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 5

- ¹ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Ewen Cameron (bank agent and secretary of the Fort William 'Town Party') to the Marquess of Lothian, January 1888
The undated letter was copied to George Wieland, Secretary of the North British Railway, 19 January 1888.
- ² SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron, quoting Cameron of Lochiel, to Wieland, 3 March 1888
- ³ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Lothian to Cameron
- ⁴ SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Cameron to Wieland, 16 February and 7 March 1888
- ⁵ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
James Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 4 April 1889, and Commons, 5 July 1889
Other witnesses in the Caledonian interest testified that the West Highland promotion had caught them by surprise. See Chapter 3, Note 98.
- ⁶ SRO/BR/HR/1/6
Highland Railway Minutes, 12 December 1888
- ⁷ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
John Walker, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 1 April 1889, and Commons, 4 July 1889
- ⁸ This summary is based on J. Hunter, The Making of the Crofting Community, and I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, qualified by the more recent interpretation in E. A. Cameron, Land for the People? Government and the Scottish Highlands, 1880-1925
- ⁹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Joseph Chamberlain M.P., Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Questions by counsel. Making a special appearance before the Lords Committee examining the West Highland Railway Bill, Chamberlain was not cross-examined in the usual way.
- ¹² SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
Chamberlain, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889
- ¹³ I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, page 216
- ¹⁴ PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 6086 1890
Western Highlands and Islands Commission, Warrant of Appointment and Letter of Instruction, 27 December 1889
Additional Letters of Instruction, 2 April and 22 May 1890
- ¹⁵ C. Fraser-MacKintosh M.P., quoted in I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, page 217
- ¹⁶ PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c. 6138 1890
Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission

- 17 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c.6086 1890
Western Highlands and Islands Commission, Letter of Instruction, 27 December 1889
- 18 For the general perception that the west coast fishery ought to be professionalised, see J.R. Coull, The Sea Fisheries of Scotland, J. Dunlop, The British Fisheries Society 1786-1893, and M. Gray, The Fishing Industries of Scotland, 1790-1914.
See also William Anderson-Smith (Scottish Fishery Board), Evidence, Glasgow and North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 4 May 1883 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/325; Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9 WHM; Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894, and Lords, 16 July 1894 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
- 19 I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, page 218
- 20 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c.6611 1891
Report of a Special Committee - Improvement of Railway Communication on the Western Coast of Scotland, with Treasury Minute
Treasury Minute, 21 May 1891
Letter of Appointment, 22 May 1891
Report, 28 November 1891
- 21 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c.6611 1891
Report, 28 November 1891
- 22 SRO/BR/HR/1/6
Highland Railway Minutes, 6 February, 6 March and 26 April 1889 and 5 February, 5 March, 19 April and 4 June, 1890
- 23 See J.R. Coull, The Sea Fisheries of Scotland, and M. Gray, the Fishing Industries of Scotland, 1790-1914
- 24 This summing up is based on parliamentary Minutes of Evidence and other material listed under Primary Sources. For example:-
WHM
Ranald MacDonald (factor for the Gordon-Cathcart estates); Michael MacNeill (fisherman and fishcurer, Barra); Captain Thomas A. Swinburne (owner of Eilean Shona and Muck), Proofs for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
William Reid (fisherman, Portree), Evidence; West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894; and James MacKintosh (factor for Lord MacDonald), Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894
- 25 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
c.6138 1890
Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission
- 26 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
John MacKenzie, managing director of the Stornoway Fish Curing Company, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894
- 27 H.A. Vallance, The Highland Railway, Chapter 12
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
John Anderson, Secretary of the Callander & Oban Railway, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
Highland Railway circular re rates for fish traffic by the S.S. 'Asia', chartered for the 1901 season

- 28 For example:-
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
Petition of South Uist fishermen, April 1901
R. MacDonald (on behalf of Sir Reginald Cathcart) to J. Watson (Solicitor, North British Railway), 3 May 1901
Kintail proprietors to Watson, 10 May 1901
- 29 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
G.H. Murray, Treasury, to Andrew Dougall, 19 August 1890
Dougall to Murray, 21 August 1890
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 30 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Memorial for the Highland Railway Company to the Treasury, 10 September 1890
Copied to the Scottish Office
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 31 SRO/BR/HR/1/6
Highland Railway Minutes, 4 June and 2 July 1890
- 32 SRO/BR/HR/1/6
Highland Railway Minutes, 29 October 1890
- 33 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
H.B. Simpson, Scottish Office, to Dougall, 13 January 1891
Dougall to Simpson, 17 January 1891
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 34 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to W.L. Jackson M.P., Treasury, 1 and 17 April 1891
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 35 Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, A History of the Great North of Scotland Railway, page 108
- 36 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Jackson to Dougall
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 37 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to Jackson
Dougall to the Marquess of Lothian
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 38 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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- 44 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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(Treasury Correspondence)
- 45 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
W.C. Dunbar to Dougall, 24 October 1892
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 46 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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- 47 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
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- 48 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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(Treasury Correspondence)
- 49 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Sir Ralph E. Welby, Treasury, to Dougall, 14 December 1892
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 50 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to Welby, 5 January 1893
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 51 J. Thomas, The Skye Railway, Chapter 6
Though in part inaccurate, Thomas offers useful additional detail.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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Additional to the letter cited in Note 50 above.
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 54 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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- 55 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
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- 56 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342
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- 57 G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, page 135

- 58 For example:- 'Fact', The Scotsman, 13, 19 and 24 September 1894, with replies by Dr. H.H. Almond, 17, 20 and 25 September
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Chapter 6

The genesis of the West Highland Railway Mallaig Extension, 1889-93

Chapter 6

Discussion now turns to the proposed Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway. State support was essential, and it was necessary to engage the North British Railway much more closely than that Company had been willing to contemplate in 1889. By 1891 the Conservative Government was broadly committed in principle to subsidising one or more west coast railway promotions, as Chapter 5 has explained. The Liberal Government of 1892-5 did not at first declare a position. The North British Company had modified if not abandoned the expansionist strategy of the 1880s and now saw the West Highland route as a burdensome subsidiary which would make a better showing when completed to the sea. By 1893 the Loch Eil & Mallaig had become the 'West Highland Banavie & Mallaig' (or 'West Highland Mallaig Extension'), under North British auspices.

The railway schemes of the 1840s aiming at Inverness via the Great Glen had included, though vaguely, a western arm to the Atlantic coast north of Ardnamurchan, in addition to whatever line might reach Oban. The Hope-Scott promotion of the 1860s, for a Lochaber branch from the Highland Railway via Loch Laggan and Glen Spean, had included a possible extension to the sea. The obvious route west of Fort William followed Telford's Lochnagaul road by Loch Eil, Glenfinnan and Loch Eilt to Arisaig. This was broadly the line which the Glasgow & North Western promoters promised to add at the earliest possible date and which A.G. Morrison submitted to the Napier Commission. It would terminate at Roshven, on Lochailort, or at Mallaig, near the mouth of Loch Nevis. The Mallaig option demanded some fifteen additional miles of heavy works by Lochnanuamh, Borrodale and Morar. It bears repeating that the Napier Report did not specify a particular railhead, though the general sense suggests Mallaig. In 1888-9 Charles Forman chose Roshven when the West Highland promoters insisted on including an extension to the west coast. His survey beyond Fort William was hasty, on the understanding that he would not be paid if the extension was rejected. The Roshven line went to Parliament as an unconvincing and speculative postscript to the main West Highland scheme, and it did not survive scrutiny by the House of Lords Committee; but it served its immediate purpose, enhancing the promoters' claim that they were opening up the country for the benefit of crofters and fishermen.

In dismissing Roshven, Parliament was certainly influenced by the opposition of the Highland Railway and by the not unreasonable objections of the Roshven landowner, professor Blackburn, who was ready to give way to public interest but strongly questioned whether Roshven was a suitable harbour. The

Highland Company would subsequently attack the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway as Roshven all over again, on the argument that the west-of-Fort William line had been tried and found wanting in 1889, so that it was unfair to put the Highland Railway (and the Caledonian Railway) to the expense of a renewed opposition. When the North British Railway came to support Mallaig it was good tactics to play up Blackburn's part in defeating the previous promotion, rather than admit that the Highland Company's case had carried the day. In any case, Parliament was mindful that, as matters stood in 1889, the Roshven line was not to be guaranteed by the North British. Approval would block, or deny a hearing to, other west coast schemes like the Garve & Ullapool, without ensuring that the West Highland route would in fact be completed to the sea. Roshven (or Mallaig) could be promoted anew, before the West Highland Railway was opened to Fort William, and judged against the various projects 'north of Strome'. This was the equitable course, especially if one line and one line only was to attract subsidy. Unfortunately for the Conservative Government of 1886-92, there was no one rail route to the west coast capable of satisfying all expectations, as the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee were to discover.

During 1890-1, when Commission and Committee were at work, John Baird of Knoydart and Robert Stewart of Kinlochmoidart became the principal movers of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway. Stewart, along with Lord Howard of Glossop, had represented what might be termed the 'Roshven interest' among the listed West Highland promoters of 1888-9, and he subsequently became, if only briefly, a director of the West Highland Company. Baird commissioned the engineering firm of Simpson & Wilson to resurvey the route to Mallaig and re-evaluate Mallaig bay as an anchorage and harbour.^[1] Among the MacKenzie Papers is a statement resembling a brief for promoters, which gives some idea of the way in which Baird's venture took shape

(The) Engineer of the West Highland Railway selected Roshven as the best terminus ... because he considered the expense of making a railway to Mallaig would be very much greater and ... because he considered that Roshven was naturally a better harbour ... It is possible ... that he did not give the proposed Mallaig Railway the full attention the scheme deserved.^[2]

The statement continued that the West Highland promoters had always intended to meet the recommendations of the Napier Commission by establishing a new railhead between Ardnamurchan and Strome Ferry. Either Roshven or Mallaig would be satisfactory, but "public feeling" had come to favour Mallaig. There was a good case for government assistance, not necessarily for the whole project but "to meet the cost of (continuing) to Mallaig". The Mallaig line would diverge from the West Highland Railway's

Banavie branch. To Kinlochailort the route was identical with Forman's Fort William - Roshven survey, and to Kinlochailort Forman's line would have cost £137,000. This figure was obtained by deducting the approximate cost of the final miles along Loch Ailort to Roshven from Forman's overall estimate for the Fort William - Roshven section. Building on from Kinlochailort to Mallaig, with something set aside for the harbour there, would bring the total cost of the Banavie - Mallaig line to some £280,000. This presentation side-stepped the question of how Forman's line would have been financed in default of North British support and implied that the Government would be asked to support only the additional miles to Mallaig.

Despite Baird's bold showing to the Lothian Commission and to the Treasury Committee, the Loch Eil & Mallaig syndicate did not have the whole-hearted support of the North British Company. If the Mallaig project went ahead the North British would negotiate a working agreement; if state support was forthcoming the North British would reconsider. It was very much the same response as had met the original 'West Highland' promoters, Boyd and Cameron, in 1887-8. And, far from offering to bring the Mallaig scheme within their West Highland guarantee, Walker and Wieland of the North British sought a 'minimum traffic' undertaking from the syndicate, with 60% of revenue earmarked for working expenses. No doubt there was bluff and manoeuvre. Baird and his friends knew that the North British would always want to control any new development west of Fort William, while Walker and Wieland hinted at easier terms if the Mallaig line could be begun (and completed) without delay. In November, 1891 Wieland relented. ("If ... a higher rate of working expenses for a period of three years is really to stand in the way of your obtaining your capital ... I should not insist.") But he also stressed that a 50% working agreement, on which the North British was bound to lose for a considerable time, was support enough. The Government, not the North British, should assist with the immediate costs of construction. On 19 November Wieland finally pledged the North British Company to work the Loch Eil & Mallaig line as a continuation of the West Highland Railway for 50% of gross receipts, provided Parliamentary approval was obtained by 1893, with a suitable junction at Banavie.^[3]

In the Outer Hebrides and in Skye there was concern that Roshven had been too readily surrendered in 1889. Ranald MacDonald, factor for Lady Gordon-Cathcart, complained that the case for Mallaig had not been properly considered before the West Highland Bill went to Parliament, where the case for Roshven had been badly handled.^[4] In May 1891 the Skye Railway Committee had reminded the North British Railway that "until it reaches the Sea the Fort William Line cannot be regarded as fully developed"

only to receive a careful reply from Walker that the North British would consider working any new line but had no plans to extend the West Highland Railway, on their own account, beyond Banavie "to Mallaig or elsewhere".^[5] When the Garve & Ullapool Railway was approved (1890), the Skye Committee had feared that Ullapool would rule out the short route to Glasgow via Mallaig and Fort William. They urged the North British that the chance of subsidy for Baird's scheme had to be pursued, even if the landowners did not contribute as much as had been expected. Neither a new railhead at Ullapool nor the expanded steamer service out of Oban could meet their needs as the West Highland route would. Like the various figureheads of Lochaber and Fort William in 1887-8, Alexander MacDonald of Treaslane, secretary of the Skye Committee, assumed that he could set North British against Caledonian. He reminded Walker that Mallaig could capture much of Oban's Hebridean traffic. Moreover traffic through Ullapool, like existing traffic via Strone Ferry, would go by Inverness and Perth - unless specifically consigned by Aberdeen, and at Perth the Caledonian was the main beneficiary: some of this traffic could be diverted to Mallaig to become exclusively North British.^[6]

But the protracted parliamentary battles of 1888-91, when the Caledonian and North British fought over the Glasgow & South Western - and over the West Highland, made for a new mood of compromise. John Conacher, who succeeded Walker as General Manager of the North British, wanted co-existence with the Caledonian. "We are endeavouring to arrive at some agreement for future relations ...", explained the Marquess of Tweeddale, Chairman of the North British, prior to Conacher's appointment.^[7] Conacher wanted to develop the West Highland route, but not on a basis of open-ended commitments. He did not share the promoters' expectation of a speedy growth in traffic, and the cost of construction was mounting. The Loch Eil & Mallaig syndicate and their allies in the Islands could no longer count on turning to advantage an ongoing conflict between Caledonian and North British.

The Great Glen Truce negotiated by the North British Company and the Highland Company in 1889, foreshadowed a similar treaty between North British and Caledonian. During 1891 the prospects of a comprehensive agreement were widely aired. *The Glasgow Herald* guessed that the Caledonian would henceforth respect the North British monopoly of Fife in return for access to Dunbartonshire and Loch Lomond and running powers over the as yet uncompleted West Highland Railway. Thereafter the two Companies would gradually pool most of their traffic.^[8] The "New Lines Agreement", usually called the "Peace Agreement", finally emerged on 31 October, 1891. It was less ambitious than the press had

scouted, but it emphasised the determination of both Companies to avoid conflict over new promotions.

Article 10 deserves to be quoted more fully.

The Companies agree ... that they shall not, except with the consent of the other, promote or support any new line ... in the district of the other, or in the districts common to both, and that they shall give no assistance to ... promoters of any new lines in any of the foresaid districts, but they shall ... in good faith discourage and oppose all applications to Parliament for ... new lines by any other Company or persons in the districts of either Company, or in districts common to both Companies. If, notwithstanding such discouragement and opposition, new lines are authorised, neither Company shall, directly or indirectly countenance (them) nor enter into any Agreement for ... maintenance or working ... without the consent of the other Company.^[9]

The Peace Agreement is to be taken seriously. Though often strained, it continued to 1914. Both parties accepted that it might eventually be endorsed by Parliament; but the vociferous hostility of commercial and industrial interests to anything that suggested rate-fixing made any such approach hazardous.^[10] Where the West Highland route was concerned, arbitration under the Peace Agreement would offer a way out, both when the North British asserted the unfettered right, which the Caledonian contested, to control the Fort William - Mallaig line and when the Caledonian sought access from Connel Ferry to Fort William and Mallaig.

1892 saw the Loch Eil & Mallaig promotion move towards fruition, only to become deadlocked over the terms on which the Treasury would give assistance. When Baird fell ill and sold his Knoydart estate, Cameron of Lochiel increasingly assumed responsibility for negotiations with the North British Company, the Scottish Office and the Treasury. Lochiel's position as the new leader of Baird's syndicate sat a little uneasily with his position as a director of the West Highland Railway. On the West Highland board, by this time very much under North British control, Lochiel and Captain Colquhoun, who was mainly concerned with the southern part of the route, were the only representatives of the 1888-9 promoters. Lochiel's remained an independent voice, urging the North British not to underestimate the contributory traffic which a west-of-Fort William extension would secure. Conacher thought it expedient to pretend that there had been no disagreement: an advance to the sea had always been intended and was only postponed when Roshven was lost. In reality, as discussed in Chapter 3, there was substance in the charge that the North British had supported the West Highland in order to occupy the territory between Helensburgh and Crianlarich and to raid the Caledonian's Oban traffic. The price was having to under-

write the West Highland all the way to Fort William. A further thirty miles (Roshven) or forty miles (Mallaig) of unprofitable construction had set the price higher than the North British, at that time, had been willing to pay.

The Loch Eil & Mallaig syndicate engaged Innes & MacKay of Inverness, who subsequently acted in a similar capacity during the battles to carry the West Highland route through the Great Glen. The West Highland Company was represented by MacRae, Flett & Rennie, no doubt with some input from N.B. MacKenzie. W.C. Dunbar spoke for the Scottish Office. The Board of Trade and the Treasury were kept informed. As in 1888-9, the North British Railway remained very much in the background until matters were well advanced.^[11] Stewart of Kinlochmoidart opened direct dealings with Conacher during May, 1892.^[12] MacRae explained that the Treasury required a specific promise from the North British. The syndicate trusted to Wieland's commitment of November, 1891.^[13] But Wieland, though still Secretary of the West Highland Railway - and the only real executive figure during the period of construction to Fort William, was no longer Secretary of the North British. He had retired, well rewarded, during the interregnum which followed Walker's sudden death, though he remained a player in the Company's always murky internal politics.^[14] On 28 April, 1892 the North British board not only consented to work the Loch Eil & Mallaig for 50% of gross receipts but also agreed in principle that, if the Treasury offered to guarantee 3% on the necessary capital over twenty five or thirty years, then the North British might continue this guarantee at the end of that period, on condition that the proprietors along the line gave land free.^[15] On 3 May J. Cathles, who had succeeded Wieland, summed up the directors' position. Any guarantee which might eventually fall on the North British must apply only to the railway, excluding the harbour at Mallaig, and be based on the estimated cost as presented to Parliament, not the final cost. Nothing should be done until the attitude of the Caledonian Company was known. This seems to have been something of a warning to Conacher that the directors remained divided.^[16]

Conacher had already approached James Thompson, the Caledonian Railway's General Manager, "as a matter of courtesy". Tweeddale made a similar approach to Joseph Bolton, the Caledonian Chairman. The Caledonian Company ought to understand that the Loch Eil & Mallaig interest had been dealing directly with the Treasury; the North British had in no way taken the initiative. But the Mallaig line was "practically an extension of the West Highland Railway", and the North British, already committed to the West Highland, was honour-bound to respond favourably now that the syndicate wanted a working

agreement.^[17] This version of events did not satisfy Thompson or the Caledonian directors. At first, Tweeddale believed that the Caledonian reaction was “not serious”, but, by the end of June, resort to the Peace Agreement was in prospect. The Caledonian wanted joint ownership or, at least, joint working west of Fort William.^[18] In anticipation of the new West Highland service to Fort William, the North British had already offered the Caledonian exchange facilities at Crianlarich; if this was accepted, Caledonian traffic might be taken in due course not just to Fort William but to Mallaig: Tweeddale and Conacher would concede no more.^[19]

Meanwhile, Lochiel had led a deputation to the Scottish Office, pressing the Mallaig project upon Lord Lothian. On 9 May, 1892 the Statement presented by the deputation was forwarded to the Treasury. This submission quoted Simpson & Wilson’s estimate for a Banavie-to-Mallaig line - £260,000, with an additional £45,000 for Mallaig harbour. Besides three prospective directors, Lochiel, Baird and Stewart, six mainland proprietors and six Islands proprietors were named as supporters, together with the Provost of Fort William and Inverness-shire’s M.P. They were ready to promote a bill in parliamentary session 1892-3, seeking a share capital of £240,000 and loan capital of £80,000 (the conventional proportions). Lord Lovat, though not an active supporter, would give land free, including the harbour site. The other landowners immediately affected were almost all in favour of the scheme. Local subscriptions ought to reach £40,000, though this included the value of some of the land to be taken. The Government was requested to assist with £30,000 outright for Mallaig harbour and either a “free grant” of £100,000 towards construction of the railway or a guaranteed dividend of 3% over thirty years on the estimated capital (£260,000).^[20]

The Government’s decision on Mallaig, and on Kyle of Lochalsh as against Lochinver, would be made in the summer of 1892. Chapter 5 has already brought the narrative to this stage. While Andrew Dougall, for the Highland Company, sought to have the Mallaig scheme ruled out, Tweeddale and Conacher were not convinced that sufficient aid would be available and wary that new obligations might be thrust upon the North British. On 17 May Tweeddale urged Conacher (then in London) to see Lothian as to “whether they mean business”.^[21] Tweeddale himself saw Lothian in Edinburgh. (“I warned him there was no chance of the NBR providing capital. Working the line at 50% was a sufficiently onerous undertaking.”)^[22] By early June it was known that the Government intended to back the Loch Eil & Mallaig promotion. On 6 June the Highland Company protested at this “very grave injustice”^[23]. On 8 June

Conacher met Stewart to begin shaping the Mallaig Bill.^[24] The Government was questioned in the House of Commons. Could the Mallaig line match the solid support which the Highland Railway and the Duke of Sutherland were ready to give to the Invershin - Lochinver scheme?^[25] On 16 June the Treasury advised the Scottish Office that "the terms offered by the promoters of the Mallaig line should be at once accepted", although this did not preclude aid for other schemes. The Treasury Guarantee which the promoters had solicited would be embodied in a Public Bill during session 1892-3. Parliament would be asked to vote £30,000 for Mallaig harbour "at the proper time" - i.e. when railway and harbour were ready. There were four conditions. A bill authorising construction was to pass through Parliament in the regular way. The North British Company was to work and maintain the line in perpetuity for 50% of gross receipts. The remaining 50% of income was to be applied, as an unqualified priority, to meeting the guaranteed dividend (3% of £260,000), diluting the Treasury's obligation. The harbour was to be approved by the Board of Trade.^[26]

In a revised Statement early in July, Lochiel explained that the Government's offer would have to be adjusted before the Mallaig project could be financed.^[27] The cost of the harbour had to be absorbed in total, at least in the short run, since the £30,000 grant towards the estimated £45,000 would not be paid until construction was completed to the satisfaction of the Board of Trade. Allowance had to be made, too, for payment of interest during construction, engineers' fees, legal and parliamentary expenses and incidentals. To float the promotion the overall capital had to be fixed at approximately £340,000, some £20,000 more than the combined share and loan capital proposed in May. ("Unless power be taken to raise the full amount required, no one in the city will look at it.")

The promoters now asked that the Treasury Guarantee cover the full £340,000 for flotation purposes. This was a commitment which, in practice, the state would never have to meet; for "certain reductions", "probable reductions" and "possible reductions" would come into play, by which Lochiel meant the eventual grant for Mallaig harbour, land given free and saving of underwriter's commission from parliamentary costs and from "contingencies". The nominal £340,000 could be brought down to roughly £300,000 and might be reduced still further if the cost of construction stayed within Simpson & Wilson's estimate. If preference shares and debentures were avoided, the Mallaig line ought to pay 2½% on the final capital, or 2¼% on the flotation capital, after deduction of the North British Company's working expenses. The Treasury would be assuming only a very small additional obligation by agreeing to revise

the terms of 16 June - simply the difference between 'topping up' to 3% on £260,000 and 'topping up' to 3% on £340,000.

However persuasive Lochiel's argument may have been, the Treasury learned with dismay (and some resentment?) that the syndicate wanted to retreat from the role of promoters. Lochiel indicated that they would gladly submit to the Government, for Treasury approval, whatever flotation arrangements could be made "with a financial house". They now wished to be seen "in the light of trustees to carry into effect the decision of the Government under such conditions as the Chancellor of the Exchequer may require".^[28] The Treasury replied on 29 July. Though "conscious of the serious liability which they were imposing on public funds", ministers had decided that the benefits which the Mallaig project would bring were sufficient to justify limited state assistance. They had chosen the form of support which the Mallaig promoters preferred for their railway, a guarantee on capital rather than an outright grant; they had "relied upon the representations made on behalf of the promoters, that with this measure of assistance the project could be realised". If the estimates were deficient, if local support was inadequate, then "the Government offer must be regarded as having lapsed, and the whole question of railway extension on the west coast must be reconsidered". It is not clear whether the outgoing Conservative Government, defeated in that summer's general election, intended to allow further negotiations.^[29]

During 1892-3 the North British Railway became fully committed to the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme, which re-emerged as the Banavie & Mallaig Extension or, the title now familiar, the West Highland Mallaig Extension. Lochiel remained the key figure. The new Liberal Government wavered, but in the end the Liberals kept open the possibility of a Treasury Guarantee.

On 20 August 1892 Lochiel wrote to Conacher seeking discussions before approaching the North British board for more support. He was still in touch with the permanent civil servants at the Treasury. Estimates were being reviewed. Would the North British show some flexibility? On 27 August and on 30 August he wrote again, stressing the need for a speedy outcome.

(The) sooner your Directors can make up their minds about Mallaig, the better, as I think the Treasury under this new Govt. are likely to prove slippery customers. I will show the correspondence I have had with the permanent officials. I foresee plenty of intriguing on the part of those who wish for Railways in Ross-shire or Sutherland .. So unless the Gov't offer is now accepted it will never be repeated.^[30]

Lochiel feared that the Crofter-Liberals elected in 1892 would exploit the railway question for their own ends, which might oblige the Government to retreat or give them the excuse to do so. (“(Your) regular land league M.P. doesn’t care in reality much about any railway. It is not his game.”)^[31] If the North British missed the opportunity of subsidy only to decide later that the West Highland route must be continued to the sea, then the entire cost would fall on the North British. Once again he reminded Conacher that the Mallaig line would bring vital contributory traffic to the West Highland proper.^[32] There can be no doubt that Lochiel wanted to meet with Tweeddale and the North British directors, after preparing the ground with Conacher. He may have calculated on repeating his success of 1888-9, when he dealt initially with Walker and Tweeddale before putting the West Highland case to the full North British board. (Lord Abinger, who had played an equal part in 1888-9, took little more to do with the West Highland Company after his brief Chairmanship; he died in 1892.) But Conacher and Tweeddale were anxious, first of all, to redefine the North British commitment to the West Highland, in view of the mounting cost of construction. They were unlikely to countenance yet more obligations to the Mallaig Extension, beyond what had been agreed in April, 1892, unless the original North British guarantee was rewritten.

By January, 1893 Conacher was able to propose that the North British Company’s West Highland Agreement of 1889, the rebate - based guarantee of 4½% on West Highland capital described in Chapter 3, be replaced by an absolute guarantee of 3½% on the final capital cost of the Helensburgh-to-Fort William-and-Banavie line. In return the West Highland Company must accept that their undertaking would eventually be absorbed into the North British, with conversion of their stock to 3% North British stock.^[33] The West Highland directors proposed that West Highland shares be endorsed in favour of the North British, instead of outright amalgamation.^[34] At least a semblance of local control and local endeavour had to be preserved if Parliament was to look kindly on a Mallaig subsidy. M.P.s hostile to the Railway Interest were ready to argue that the North British had ample resources to support the West Highland, just as the Highland Company had ample resources to complete the Dingwall & Skye route to Kyle of Lochalsh, without any state aid. The recast guarantee was scheduled to the North British Railway Act, 1893.^[35]

Only when this had been settled did the North British directors agree to put their Company’s credit behind another £100,000 of capital for the Mallaig Extension, on the basis that the Treasury Guarantee on the first £260,000 could still be secured. Tweeddale and four directors formed a special committee to

draft a combined working agreement and guarantee - i.e. the new North British guarantee, additional to the Treasury's commitment.^[36] Thus fortified, the West Highland Company decided to pursue a Late Bill in the current parliamentary session for the Banavie & Mallaig line, though the attitude of Sir William Harcourt, the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, was at best lukewarm.^[37] Other steps were taken during the winter of 1892-3. Tweeddale and Conacher sounded Lucas & Aird, the contractors engaged on the West Highland, whereupon Aird set one of his engineers to report on the Simpson & Wilson survey. Aird confirmed that the line was feasible; but his firm would be reluctant to tender for it until they had completed the Helensburgh - Fort William contract, on which they expected a heavy loss.^[38] Forman, whose Fort William - Roshven survey of 1888 had been incorporated into the Mallaig scheme, believed that he could improve the Kinlochailort-to-Mallaig section.^[39] Conacher wanted to make sure that, in any event, the Mallaig line would not be significantly more severe, from an operating point of view, than the rest of the West Highland route.^[40] Alexander Simpson refused to co-operate with Forman.^[41] At the beginning of March, Tweeddale reminded Conacher that Forman had not been paid for the abortive Roshven survey; in return for "some consideration" now, he would leave the Mallaig Extension to Simpson.^[42]

A Late Bill faced serious scrutiny by the Standing Orders Committees in both Houses of Parliament. It was necessary both to show that the Loch Eil & Mallaig promotion could not have been rescued from the impasse of July, 1892, in time to be recast as a West Highland promotion before the November deadline for session 1892-3, and to show that public interest would be served by taking the West Highland Banavie & Mallaig Bill in 1893 rather than have it follow the normal course in 1893-4. But in making a case for special consideration the West Highland Company ran the risk of revealing how much had still to be resolved, including the respective obligations of the Treasury and of the North British Railway. At the beginning of March, 1893 the parliamentary agents, Durnford & Co., warned Conacher that "many points in connection with the financial powers" were outstanding and that they could not decide "the most politic course to be taken in dealing with the Treasury".^[43] Simpson, instructed by Lochiel to make sure that there could be no further accusations of undercosting, produced the new figure of £308,240 for the Mallaig line (excluding Mallaig harbour).^[44] By the end of March the parliamentary plans were ready, together with traffic estimates as ambitious as Conacher was prepared to risk.^[45] Durnfords expected opposition both from the Caledonian Railway and from the Highland Railway. They anticipated that Parliament, would pay more heed to the latter, since Mallaig, like Roshven in 1889, on the face of things

menaced the Dingwall & Skye route rather than the Callander & Oban. But it could be argued that the Highland Railway, having accepted state assistance for the Strome Ferry - Kyle of Lochalsh extension as discussed in Chapter 5, had forfeited any right to challenge similar assistance for the Mallaig line.^[46] Despite hostile submissions from Thompson and Dougall, the Commons Standing Orders Committee allowed the Bill to go forward. It was Dumfords' intention, after this first victory, to delay until the Government could be brought to promise a subsidy equal to the Conservative offer of 1892.^[47] But the Lords Standing Orders Committee proved intractable. Permission to bring in the Bill was refused on 27 April, 1893.^[48]

The Caledonian case before the Standing Orders Committees echoed what the Highland Company had been arguing since the Loch Eil & Mallaig project first emerged. Mallaig was another Roshven and the two Companies should not be put to the expense of opposing for the second time what had been examined and rejected in 1889.^[49] The Caledonian also argued that three years had now elapsed since the Lothian Commission; there could be no good reason for rushing a Mallaig promotion in 1895, when the West Highland Railway, on which the Mallaig line depended, would not open to Fort William for another twelve or eighteen months. Hasty approval would jeopardise both the Highland Company's plans for Kyle of Lochalsh and the Caledonian's own plans to extend the Callander & Oban route by Appin and Ballachulish to Fort William.^[50]

Whether the Caledonian would support a Connel Ferry - Fort William line remained to be seen. In 1889 Thompson had declared that a Callander & Oban branch to Fort William was ruled out if Parliament approved the West Highland Railway, but that was tactics. The North British remained wary, so much so that rumours of a most unlikely route by Glen Coe, Ardgour and Loch Sunart to Kentra, as an alternative to the Mallaig Extension, were taken at least half seriously.^[51] Without "the fullest powers and facilities" over the Mallaig line, Thompson would not waive the Caledonian Company's right to arbitration under the Peace Agreement, while Conacher would only repeat the North British offer of mutual exchange at Crianlarich.^[52] So matters rested until the Mallaig Extension returned to Parliament in 1893-4.

For the Highland Company, the campaign against Mallaig had begun in 1890, when the findings of the Lothian Commission first emerged. Chapter 5 has examined how Dougall and his directors had tried to ensure that, when a policy of subsidy was adopted, only the Dingwall & Skye line or one of the proposed

'north of Strome' lines should benefit. In 1892, when the Conservatives finally offered to assist the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme, the Highland made ready to oppose the Public Bill which would give effect to the Treasury Guarantee. With the Liberals in office and the Conservative offer more or less suspended, Dougall chose to go over the old ground. He sent to Gladstone copies of all the correspondence of the previous two years, with a lengthy covering letter.

It has always been in contemplation to extend the (Dingwall & Skye) Line to Kyle when circumstances permitted. Were the Line so extended all the reasonable wants of ... the Inverness-shire Mainland north of Fort - William, and also the wants of the Inverness-shire Islands, would be adequately provided for, but in view of the possibility of the Government ... aiding in the construction of a competing line to Mallaig, the Directors ... feel themselves paralysed with regard to ... Kyle.^[53]

This had laid a foundation for Dougall's subsequent approach to Harcourt, which led on to the Liberal Government's decision to support the Strome Ferry - Kyle of Lochalsh line. There was some prospect that the Liberals, anxious to dispose of the awkward legacy from the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee, would accept what their predecessors had not accepted: Kyle would rule out Mallaig. And this was what Lochiel feared, along with the danger that the Crofter M.P.s would muddy the waters, or throw their weight behind 'north of Strome' promotions. In other respects, Dougall's tactics were risky, challenging the North British to abandon the fiction that the West Highland Company was independent. ("The West Highland Railway ... really belongs to the North British Railway ... and the ... Mallaig Line would be an extension of that Line, which ought to be made, if at all, by the North British Company..").^[54] The North British could readily reply that the Highland Company, despite protestations of penury and concern for the public, was well able to finance the improvement of the Dingwall & Skye route but would never have done so but for the threat of a West Highland railhead at Roshven or Mallaig.^[55]

In March, 1893, when the Government's attitude to the impending Late Bill for the West Highland Banavie & Mallaig promotion was still unknown, Dougall renewed his attack, writing both to the Treasury and to the Scottish Office.

As the representations ... continually repeated, with regard to the supposed public advantages to be derived from a Line to Mallaig, are extremely fallacious, .. the Directors of the Highland Railway ... think it their duty, as much in the public interest as in the interest of their shareholders, to place (the facts) before you .. There is ... no local traffic, and there is no fishing in the Mallaig district. There would no doubt be a gain in distance ... but the distance is much more than neutralised by the additional sailing to Mallaig, and the very inferior character, in curves and gradients, of the Line

from Mallaig to Helensburgh. There would ... be no saving in through rates, as these are grouped.^[56]

Dougall reminded the Government of “two extremely important circumstances”. Construction of the Kyle of Lochalsh extension would soon commence, and the Aviemore cut-off was advancing to completion. With an improved route between Kyle and Perth in prospect, “there does not now exist any plausible reason for Government funds being contributed towards the construction of the (Mallaig) Line”.^[57] As for the Government's pledge of £45,000 for the Kyle line, assisting an established enterprise was not at all the same thing as assisting a new competitor.^[58]

When the Liberals replaced the Conservatives in 1892, Lochiel looked to the permanent civil servants to uphold continuity of policy.^[59] On 10 March 1893 Tweeddale reassured Conacher that the Treasury officials saw no difficulty in rewriting the lapsed offer to guarantee the Mallaig scheme, but could not answer for Harcourt. Lochiel should “lose no time in intimating to the (Government) that the line was to be proceeded with under the auspices of the N.B.”.^[60] On 24 March Durnfords formally approached the Treasury, enclosing copies of the West Highland Railway Acts of 1889 and 1890, which recorded the North British Company's commitment to the West Highland route, a copy of the proposed Banavie & Mallaig Bill including plans and estimates, and a copy of the petition craving that the Bill be taken ‘late’.^[61]

Durnfords explained how the terms insisted on by the previous Government in the Treasury Letter of June, 1892 made it “difficult ... to adjust the capital powers ... or to decide ... the capital required over and above the (guaranteed) £260,000”. The North British Railway would help to find an additional £100,000, though the precise form of this assistance remained to be fixed. The clauses in the draft *Banavie & Mallaig* Bill were open to amendment in Parliament, to incorporate whatever formula the Treasury might agree. It was understood that state aid, as a general rule, required separate legislation; the promoters had framed a comprehensive Parliamentary Notice which referred to the possibility of such aid and they had incorporated into their Bill clauses to the same effect; but this was only to establish a basis for negotiation.

The promoters proposed an alternative form of guarantee. 3% on £260,000 would be paid annually, irrespective of the revenue earned by the Mallaig line. The shareholders would receive £3,900 per half year from public funds; the Treasury would recoup up to £3,900 every six months, as the income of the line might permit. This would make it easier to float the promotion, but the Treasury's net obligation would

be no greater. However little the Mallaig line might earn, however slowly its traffic was built up, the Treasury's commitment would always be to some degree diluted. It was impossible that the full annual sum guaranteed (£7,800,) would ever have to be paid. The North British Company was prepared to consider other formulae. Conacher sketched various proposals which Durnfords might make, at discretion, to the Treasury.^[62] A fixed annual grant of £6,000 over thirty years was acceptable. If the Treasury chose, £260,000 could be rendered as government shares. Traffic receipts in excess of working and maintenance costs would be allocated relative to the final cost of the railway - i.e. the Treasury's £260,000 of ordinary shares would eventually be expressed as a proportion of the final cost, and the Treasury would be entitled to that proportion of any surplus income. It will be appreciated that this arrangement did not tie the North British to a 50% working agreement, which suggests that Conacher, like Wieland and Walker before him, wanted to impress on the Government how working the Mallaig line at the unrealistic figure of 50% was a concealed subsidy at the expense of the North British shareholders. Walker had favoured a government shareholding arrangement in 1888, when the original 'West Highland' promoters had tried to commit the North British to their Glen Coe - Fort William - Arisaig line. On one point the North British Company was vigilant: "reasonable costs", in addition to the 50% of gross revenue to be set aside against working expenses, ought to be reserved before the balance was devoted to diluting the Treasury Guarantee. These costs included passenger duty, directors' fees, local authority rates etc.^[63]

Harcourt remained elusive. Conacher pressed Durnfords to do their utmost to ascertain his position "this week", after which Wieland could be brought in, to preserve the fiction that the West Highland Company and not the North British was dealing directly with the Government^[64]. On 18 April, when the Banavie & Mallaig Bill was poised between Standing Orders in the Commons and Standing Orders in the Lords, the Treasury replied to Durnfords' submission.

You ask that the offer of the late (Government) may be modified in two important points.

1. That instead of 50 per cent of the gross receipts being applied to the first instance towards payment of the 3 per cent on the guaranteed capital .., the Treasury should be empowered to pay in the first instance the 3 per cent ... to the company, receiving back from the company each half-year the proportion of the receipts accruing to the company (sic).

2. That very considerable deductions should be made from the 50 per cent of gross receipts, which are to be applied towards payment of the dividend of 3 per cent.

(The Treasury) cannot entertain any modifications of the conditions laid down...^[65]

Conveying this dusty answer to Conacher, Durnfords stressed that the principle of subsidy had not been abandoned and that this was largely because of civil service pressure. The Treasury's reply was "satisfac-

tory in as much as it inferentially assumes that ...the Government are bound by the offer of their predecessors". But Harcourt might seize on any demand for modifications as an excuse to withdraw the offer.

(Harcourt is) personally strongly opposed to the guarantee and grant and ... only prevented from at once refusing them by the representations of ... Treasury officials, that there must be continuity of policy ... and that the present Government are bound by the offer of the late one.^[66]

It would be politic to make no mention at all of better terms, until subsidy had been agreed. The detail could perhaps be amended when the Treasury came to examine the requisite working agreement between the North British Company and the West Highland Company. And the Liberal Government might be more amenable to the idea of an annual grant, as Conacher had already suggested, or an outright payment of £100,000.^[67] In the end the Mallaig Extension Bill submitted in 1893-4 retained the Conservatives' formula - a Treasury Guarantee of core capital plus a grant towards Mallaig harbour.

I. Statement of the deputation, headed by Cameron of Lochiel, enclosed in a Letter from the Scotch Office to the Treasury, dated the 9th of May 1892.

1. The railway proposed is a single line of the ordinary gauge, commencing at Banavie, by a junction of the West Highland Railway, and passing along the shores of Loch Eil, across Glenfinnan, and down the south side of Loch Eilt, to the head of Lochailort, and thence via Arisaig to Mallaig, a little west of Loch Nevis.

The railway will be about 38 miles in length, and Messrs. Simpson and Wilson, civil engineers, Glasgow, who have made a survey at the expense of Mr. Baird of Knoydart, estimate the cost of constructing and completing the line at 260,000 l., and the harbour, if constructed in accordance with the suggestions of the Board of Trade, at 45,000 l.

2. The project is supported by Lochiel, MacLeod of MacLeod, Lord Abinger, Lord Lovat, Lord MacDonald, Lord Howard of Glossop, Sir John Ramsden, Mr. Fraser Mackintosh, M.P., Mr. Baird of Knoydart, Lady Scott of North Harris, Lady Gordon Cathcart of South Uist, Colonel MacDonald of Glenalladale, Mr. Stewart of Kinlochmoidart, Mr. Norman Macpherson of Eigg, Professor Blackburn of Roshven, Mr. Alexander MacDonald of Treaslane, Mr. Birkbeck of Arnisdale, Mr. Macintyre, Provost of Fort William, and others.

3. A committee of landowners and others are prepared to promote a Bill in the next Session of Parliament to incorporate a company to construct the railway, with a share capital of 240,200 l., and power to borrow 80,000 l.

Lochiel, Mr. Baird of Knoydart, and Mr. Stewart of Kinlochmoidart are prepared to become members of the board of directors and no time will be lost after the act has been obtained in constructing the line, and opening it for public traffic.

4. Lord Lovat has promised to give a free grant of his land which the proposed railway will traverse for a distance of about four miles, and the site for the harbour at Mallaig. The majority of the landowners through whose estates the line will pass are favourable to the scheme. The local subscriptions towards the undertaking are estimated at 40,000 l. This sum includes the value of some of the lands to be taken.

5. The North British Railway Company have been consulted, and have intimated their willingness to enter into a working agreement (which would include maintenance, plant, and all expenses connected with the working of the line) for 50 per cent of the gross receipts from all traffic passing over the line.

6. The promoters submit that the Government should assist the scheme either by (1) making a free grant of the sum of 100,000 l. towards the cost of construction of the railway, or guaranteeing for a period of 30 years a dividend of 3 per cent on said cost; and (2) contributing, whichever alternative may be adopted, two-thirds of the cost of the harbour.

7. In view of the time which has already lapsed, the promoters desire respectfully to impress upon the Government that an immediate intimation of their intentions is absolutely necessary, to enable the promoters timeously to complete the arrangements which must be made for the deposit of a Bill in Parliament next Session.

II Revised 'West Highland Agreement', North British Railway 1893

I send herewith a print of the Agreement of 1889 altered by the Solicitor ... to carry out the new arrangement, except as regards power to acquire the Undertaking as to which he has prepared a separate Draft also enclosed. (I) feel that the form of a Working Agreement is not suitable to the circumstances, and that there should simply be a lease for 999 years, the rent being the sum necessary to pay the fixed charges, the reasonable expenses of directorial and financial management, and 3½% per cent on the capital expended, the North British Company paying Government Duty and Rates and Taxes.

J. Cathles, Secretary of the North British Railway to J. Conacher, General Manager, 30 December 1892

(I) return the print of the Agreement with the West Highland Company of 1889 altered ... to form the proposed new Agreement..., and as instructed I have included ... a clause giving this Company powers to acquire the West Highland instead of putting that power into separate agreement.

J. Watson, Solicitor of the North British Railway to Conacher, 4 January 1893

(I) still think the power of acquiring the ... West Highland Company should form part of the Agreement securing the absolute guarantee to them, .. a reasonable condition.. when so valuable a consideration was being given. I do not know of any reason why ... the guarantee should not contain this ... There are ... reasons why it should, if ... one object of the new agreement is to relieve this Co. of the necessity of exercising its power to subscribe to the West Highland, or only to a comparatively small extent... (A) stock absolutely guaranteed is less likely to be held in large blocks than stock issued under the existing contingent guarantee, which is of a more speculative nature. It is ... conceivable that if the new Agreement without the option clause were confirmed by the West Highland shareholders they would object at a subsequent date to confirm a separate Agreement giving us the power to acquire their undertaking without any further advantage to them; .. give more ... than 3½% on their entire Capital Expenditure. So far as the North British shareholders are concerned, I cannot imagine that anyone who approves of the absolute guarantee ... will refuse to accept the option to purchase without further cost... I sent your Lordship some figures about two months ago, comparing the result of working under the old and new Agreements. I assumed ... a total cost not exceeding the amount of the authorised capital of £826,000, but ... this ... will be considerably exceeded, and I think it would be well if we knew for what sum the line can be completed ..

Conacher to the Marquess of Tweeddale, Chairman of the North British Railway, 5 January 1893

(Durnfords) made it clear ... that the addition of any such provision as you suggest would be at once struck out ... (I) cannot see how, if we make it perpetual, it could be the interest of any sane person ... to outbid the N.B. ... I quite see that it will be necessary for me ... to state what the line will cost - or as near as possible.

Tweeddale to Conacher (draft), 13 January 1893

Estimated Earnings of West Highland Railway

Mr Walker's evidence, 1899

Net revenue on basis of Callander & Oban line	£29,467
Dividend on Capital of £644,676 as then estimated	£4. 8. 8 per cent
Dividend on £826,000 as estimated up to 1890	£3. 11. 4
Dividend on £1,000,000	£2. 18. 10

£1,000,000 3½% if issued at c.110 would yield £1,100,000 at a charge for the N.B. Co. of £35,000 per annum.

Cost to finish now estimated at £950,000

Memorandum in Conacher's hand, 19 January 1893

For Appendix I see SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93

For Appendix II see SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 6

- 1 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Alexander Simpson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894
- 2 WHM
Statement re proposed Loch Eil and Mallaig Railway
The statement is undated, but it belongs with other material submitted to the Lothian Commission in 1889-90
- 3 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
George Wieland to John Baird of Knoydart, 9, 13 and 19 November 1891
- 4 WHM
Ranald MacDonald to MacRae, Flett and Rennie, (?) April 1889
See also MacDonald to Baird, 9 March 1889
- 5 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Alexander MacDonald, Skye Railway Committee, to Wieland, 4 May 1891
John Walker, General Manager of the North British Railway to MacDonald, 12 May 1891
See also North British Railway Minutes, 12 May 1891 SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
- 6 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
MacDonald to Wieland, 4 May 1891
- 7 SRO/BR/SPC/9/1
Tweeddale to Conacher, 15 August 1891
- 8 Glasgow Herald, 23 October 1891
- 9 SRO/BR/CAL/3/12 and 60
SRO/BR/NBR/3/15
The press was confused by separate negotiations between the Caledonian Company and the North British for exchange of traffic at Crianlarich SRO/BR/HRP(S)/1/18
- 10 G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, Chapters 9 and 12
- 11 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Conacher, 5 and 11 April 1892
Conacher, Memorandum, 13 April 1892
W.C. Dunbar to Charles Innes (Innes & MacKay), 16 April 1892
- 12 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Conacher, Memorandum, 14 May 1892
- 13 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Conacher, 20 April 1892
- 14 SRO/BR/SPC/9/1
Conacher Papers
J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, pages 135-40
- 15 SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes
- 16 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
J. Cathles to Conacher

- 17 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher to James Thompson, 14 April 1892
Conacher to Tweeddale, 5 May 1892, repeated on 12 May
- 18 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Thompson to Conacher, 23 May and 2 and 16 June 1892
Tweeddale to Conacher, 31 May 1892
Conacher to Thompson, 27 May and 3 and 23 June 1892
- 19 SRO/BR/HRP(S)/1/18
- 20 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Copy of the Statement as forwarded by the Scottish Office. It was later included with other correspondence in support of the West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
- 21 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher
- 22 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher, 31 May 1892
- 23 SRO/BR/NBR/1764/6
Andrew Dougall, Secretary of the Highland Railway, to G.J. Goschen, Chancellor of the Exchequer (Treasury Correspondence)
- 24 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher, Memorandum, 8 June 1892
- 25 The Scotsman, 14 June 1892
- 26 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Sir Ralph E Welby, Treasury, to W. C. Dunbar, Scottish Office. Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4 (Treasury Correspondence)
- 27 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Copy of Lochiel's revised Statement as forwarded by the Scottish Office. Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4 (Treasury Correspondence)
- 28 Ibid
- 29 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Frank Mowatt, Treasury, to Lochiel. Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4 (Treasury Correspondence)
- 30 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Lochiel to Conacher
- 31 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Lochiel to Conacher, 30 August 1892
- 32 Ibid
- 33 For the proposed guarantee of the Banavie - Mallaig line by the North British Railway see:-
SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes
Discussions by the North British board, 27 October, 24 November and 22 and 23 December 1892
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Conacher's correspondence with Cathles, Tweeddale and J. Watson (Solicitor of the North British Railway)
Cathles to Conacher, 30 December 1892

Watson to Conacher, 4 January 1893
Conacher to Tweeddale, 5 January 1893
Tweeddale to Conacher, 12 January 1893
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher to Lochiel, 31 August 1892
Lochiel, Memorandum, 1 September 1892

- 34 SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes, 19 January 1893
- 35 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894
- 36 SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes, 16 February 1893
- 37 SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
West Highland Railway Minutes, 17 February 1893
- 38 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Report on the Loch Eil & Mallaig line by Lucas & Aird's engineer, J. Blue, 14 February 1893
John Aird to Tweeddale, 21 February 1893
- 39 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher, 6 March 1893
- 40 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher to Simpson & Wilson, 3 March 1893
Simpson & Wilson to Conacher, 4 March 1893
- 41 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Simpson & Wilson to Conacher, 3 March 1893
- 42 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher, 6 March 1893
- 43 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 8 March 1893
- 44 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
MacRae, Flett & Rennie to Tweeddale, 3 March 1893
- 45 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Simpson & Wilson to Conacher, 25 March 1893
SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
West Highland Railway Minutes, 30 March 1893
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Report on potential traffic of the Mallaig line by A. Anderson, canvasser for the goods department of the North British Railway, 31 March 1893
(Anderson also appears as an employee of J. & P. Cameron, the carting firm closely associated with the North British Railway.)
- 46 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 27 April 1894
- 47 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 14 April 1893
- 48 SRO/BR/NBR/1/40 and SRO/BR/WEH/1/1
North British Railway Minutes and West Highland Railway Minutes, 28 April 1893

- 49 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Callander & Oban Railway Petition to the House of Commons Standing Orders Committee and similar
Caledonian Railway Petition, as copied by Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 14 April 1893
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to G.H. Murray, Treasury, 21 August 1890
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 50 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Caledonian Railway Petition to the House of Commons Standing Orders Committee, as copied by
Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 14 April 1893
- 51 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Durnford & Co. to Conacher
Petition of the Inhabitants of Acharacle, Kentra and Moidart, copied to the Scottish Office, to the
Caledonian Railway, to the North British Railway and to the West Highland Railway, 10 March 1893
The Petition suggested Connel Ferry to Kentra via Corran Ferry or Banavie to Kentra via Loch Shiel.
- 52 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Thompson to Conacher, 15 March 1893
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Conacher to Thompson, 10 and 16 March 1893
- 53 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to W.E. Gladstone, 25 August 1892
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
For a good example of the criticism levelled at the Highland Railway, and at the Liberal Government, see
James Caldwell, Liberal M.P. for Glasgow, St. Rollox and a Chamberlain supporter, Glasgow Herald,
19 December 1892
See also I.M.M. MacPhail, The Crofters' War, pages 219-24 cf. 'A West Highlander', Glasgow Herald,
20 January 1893
- 56 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Dougall to Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 18 March 1893
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
See also Dougall, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
- 59 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Lochiel to Conacher, 20 and 30 August 1892
- 60 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher
- 61 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Durnford & Co. to the Treasury. Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1894-5
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 62 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher, Memorandum, 30 March 1893
- 63 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Durnford & Co. to the Treasury, 24 March 1893.

- 64 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Conacher to Durnford & Co., 15 April 1893
- 65 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Treasury to Durnford & Co.
Treasury to Lochiel. Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1894-5
(Treasury Correspondence)
- 66 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 19 April 1893
- 67 Ibid.